

From LONDON



To HELSINKI

In a WAYFARER



Ralph Roberts
W 9885



London to Helsinki by Wayfarer - The route - Total distance: 1750 mls



The sequence of sails from London to Helsinki in a Wayfarer took place over a period of 12 years, in 3 different Wayfarer dinghies, starting in 1998 with a North Sea crossing from Southwold, Suffolk to Esbjerg, Denmark, and finally completed in 2010 with the sail to Tower Bridge, from Southwold.

The various cruises were accomplished with crew from 6 different countries: UK, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, as well as one section sailed solo. Although not necessary for the completion of the trip, a cruise along the southern coast of the Danish island of Fyn has also been included, as the annual rally of Scandinavian Wayfarers at Rantzausminde was central to both the initial concept of the sail from the UK to Denmark, and the linking up of the sails around the Danish coast. Two of the sections were sailed westward, rather than eastward, though for the sake of continuity, the photos taken during the trips have been arranged in order, starting from London Tower Bridge.

With the exception of the campsite whilst at Rantzausminde, a boat tent over the Wayfarer was the only overnight accommodation used throughout the trip. It took around an hour and a half to convert the boat from a sailing dinghy to a rather confined, but sheltered living space; with about the same period of time each morning to change it back into a sailing dinghy. The experience gained from a prior 15 year period of cruising was used to equip the boat with every item of gear likely to be needed for the various trips. Each item was stored in a specific place, and also secured and/or tethered to the boat at all times when sailing, so that nothing would be lost in the event of a capsize.

Safety and seamanship were considered paramount, though the problem of poor decision making due to tiredness was experienced. The possibility of capsizing was minimised by having the easiest of reefing systems, and reducing sail area early in stronger wind conditions so as to be in full control of the boat at all times. A buoyancy aid was always worn, with a waterproof VHF and a GPS immediately to hand.

This photo album and the captions record only a small sample of the many experiences that occurred during the various trips. There are no pictures of the most demanding of the sailing, since it was neither practical, nor seamanlike to use a camera in these situations. There were also many occasions when the opportunity to take an interesting photo was missed, simply because it wasn't an instinctive reaction to do so for someone more interested in sailing than photography.

Ralph Roberts W9885

Section 1- Southwold to
London Tower Bridge

Date: Sept 2010

Time taken: 6 Days

Distance covered: 145 mls

Crew: Jacques Boirie (France)





Sailing on the Thames, with the iconic Tower Bridge as a backdrop. We stopped overnight at St Katherine's Haven - Spree Lady was undoubtedly the smallest visiting boat in the marina, and with our boat tent, possibly the one causing the most interest!

Passing the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, with the Royal Observatory and the very famous meridian landmark on the horizon in the background.



Jacques helming Spree Lady through the Thames Barrier. Using our hand held VHF to seek permission to pass through was only successfully achieved on our return trip.

Approaching the M25, QE2 bridge at Dartford. This was certainly the longest distance I had motored in a Wayfarer, but as I had previously sailed a Wayfarer all the way to Tower Bridge, didn't feel I was 'cheating' too much!





Spree Lady tied up to a launch on a mooring at Thurrock YC, and ready for an early morning start on the flood tide. We had stopped here for the night to refuel, and had been treated to the greatest of hospitality.

Motoring into a strong headwind meant that we used far more fuel than had been planned for, and it was evident that we would need to stop to re-fuel. Photo taken by Jacques' friends on 'Trinovante', off Southend.



Spree Lady (in right foreground), moored in strong winds at Thorpe Bay YC. We had made a planned stop here and the Club had made us most welcome.

Jacques helming out of the River Crouch to round Foulness Sand. He had been amazed at how far we had needed to come out into the estuary before we could put the centre-board fully down.





Anchored for the night off the river Crouch. We had tied up near some rocks to be able to get ashore, though had risked the possibility of grounding on a loose rock along the muddy shoreline.

Spree Lady prepared for the day's sail after an overnight stop at Felixstowe Ferry. I knew of the facilities available here, having stopped in the small harbour previously.



Sailing along Dunwich Bay in a good breeze with Jacques on the helm. Southwold can just be seen on the far horizon.

Spree Lady being launched from the sailing club slipway at Southwold. I had learnt to sail here and it had provided me with an excellent grounding in all the sailing skills needed to cruise extensively.



Section 2: Southwold to Esbjerg



Section 2: Southwold to Esbjerg

Date: June 1998

Time taken: 8 Days

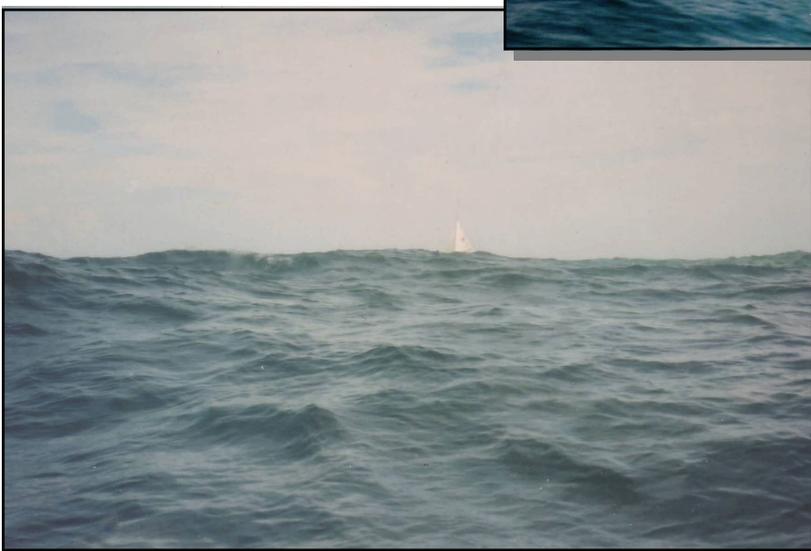
Distance covered: 390 mls

Crew: Cedric Clarke (UK)



Tied up at Southwold Sailing Club pontoon, and packing all the necessary gear for the trip across the North Sea to Den Helder. We had needed to bring forward our departure by 18 hours due to gale force winds being forecast in 48 hours time, as this allowed us sufficient time to make the trip to Den Helder.

Sea Rocket, accompanying us on our trip, sailing in big seas from a strong offshore wind after leaving the shelter of the land. We had both put in a reef soon after leaving Southwold, which with the swell, had made Bob Harland feel very seasick.



The big seas continued through the next morning and early afternoon, which was of no help to Bob in overcoming his sickness. His wife Clare, had not slept at this point for over 30 hours, but she still managed to keep going for another 12 hours before Bob was well enough to helm.



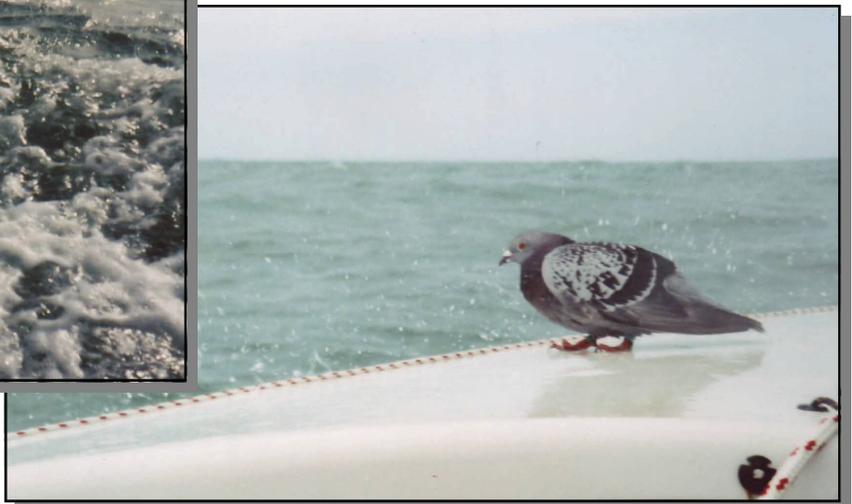
With the wind veering a little more easterly to give the chance of an unexpected gybe in the rough seas and strong winds, we decided it was safer to sail on genoa only. Clare still on the helm, with Bob lying on the floor of the boat and hidden from view.

Cedric snatching some well earned sleep in a less than comfortable, and somewhat exposed position.



We sailed for a period of over 12 hours on genoa only, but still maintained a speed of around 5 kts, so made very good progress towards Den helder.

A racing pigeon, presumably battling against the strong headwinds, saw an opportunity to take a rest on our fore-deck.





Sea Rocket appearing about to be overwhelmed by a large wave, though in fact the boat is in the distance whilst the wave is close by.

The sea had calmed down considerably as the sun began to set and we prepared for our second night's sail. We were now approaching the Dutch coastline, with the prospect of arriving around mid morning the next day, after 32 hours at sea.



Drying out at Den Helder YC after the long trip, with our gear over the adjacent boats.

We had managed to arrive in Den Helder well before the gale that had been forecast. This German yacht however had set out for Cowes Week despite the clear gale warning, and had needed to be rescued by the local lifeboat.





Bob and Clare leaving Den Helder for the sail along the Waddensea and the Friesian Islands, in very much calmer conditions than had previously been experienced. The gales that had kept us in Den Helder had at least allowed Clare to thoroughly rest and recover from her previous incredible helping endurance.

Whilst the yachts were keeping to the main, clearly marked channels, we were able to sail a more direct route over much shallower water. With a good breeze as well as a strong tide beneath us, we were able to make 8kts over the ground.



There were times however, when the route ahead was too shallow, even for a dinghy like a Wayfarer. The channel marking withies were a good indication of there being little depth at Low Water.

Bob and Clare setting out from Nes for their own chosen route to Rantzausminde in Denmark by sailing inside the Friesian Islands and through the Kiel Canal, which they reached by the end of the week long rally. We chose to arrive earlier by sailing to Esbjerg and be met with my car and trailer.



Spree Lady under sail with just an asymmetric spinnaker, as we had tended to keep gybing with the main up. We chose to sail outside the Friesian Islands to Borkum in order to avoid the shallow channels at Low Water.

Approaching Borkum at sunset, though it was to take us another 2 hours of (motor) sailing against the strong tide, to reach the shelter of the harbour at around 22.30.



The adjacent yacht 'Delphin' in the harbour at Borkum, on which we had hung out our gear to dry - not realising there was anyone aboard!



Stuck in the shallow water in an attempt to sail round the south side of Borkum - having delayed our departure to be as hospitable as possible to the great generosity of our neighbours on Delphin.



Sailing past the very popular beach at the holiday resort of Borkum - 2 hours later than if we hadn't tried to take a 'short cut', and now sailing against a strong flood tide. It was to cost us the opportunity of crossing the second shipping lane in daylight, though to our good fortune, this didn't prove to be a problem.

Cedric helming in strong winds and big seas - the harbourmaster at Borkum had given us a very favourable weather forecast, which proved highly inaccurate. I had woken too late to listen to the weather forecast on the radio.



The welcome sight and warmth of the sun rising over the horizon. I had become cold during the night after the water from a breaking wave had gone down the collar of my offshore jacket.

Sailing with a double reefed main around mid-morning the next day, and starting to near the islands off the Danish coastline - with the wind and sea building again, and the tops of the waves beginning to break.





This picture rather diminishes the height of the enormous waves, as we sailed through the afternoon on jib only, whilst still maintaining a speed of at least 6kts. Some idea of the wave height can be gained from the second (background) wave behind the one with the partially breaking crest.

The tall white chimney in the port of Esbjerg, which was visible for miles out to sea, and was a very welcome confirmation that we were at last approaching our destination.



Sailing into Ho Bugt SC in the deteriorating weather conditions, and just before the deadline we had set ourselves of reaching sheltered waters by 18.00 that day.

Spree Lady with all the cruising gear removed, lying at anchor before being brought ashore for safety, as a severe gale had been forecast to blow through that night. The organisers of a Triathlon took down a marquee they had erected for the event starting the next day, such was the ferocity of the gale forecast!



Section 3: Esbjerg to Svendborg (Rantzausminde)



Section 3: Esbjerg to Svendborg

Date: June 2010

Time taken: 14 days

Distance covered: 360 mls

Crew: Sailed Solo



Spree Lady at Ho Bugt SC, and being prepared for the solo sail to Rantzausminde on the island of Fyn. I had been fortunate that one of my many Danish friends, Jens Konge Rasmussen, was a long standing member of the club, as well as being one of the founders of Danish Wayfaring.



Being given a lift out to Spree Lady, which had been anchored at Low Water earlier in the afternoon, ready for a dawn start the next morning to catch the start of the flood tide.

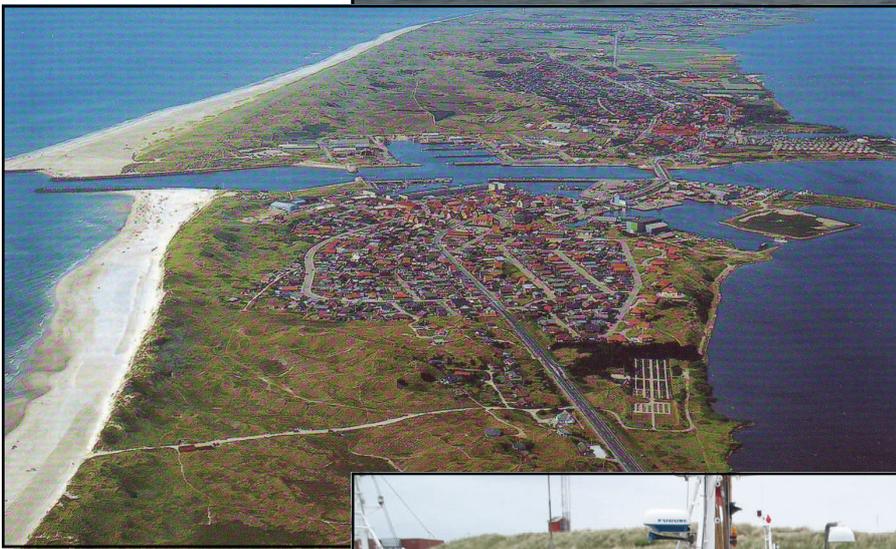
This picture typifies the virtually continuous sand-dune shoreline of the Danish Jutland coast, which in strong onshore winds, had proved to be so hazardous in previous centuries that it had caused the Kiel canal to be built as a safer, alternative route.





Spree Lady under full sail in light winds, out to the headland of Blåvands Huk. It would be another 10 days before the winds would drop sufficiently to be under full sail again.

Approaching the entrance to Hvide Sande after a long (50 mile) sail. The wartime bunkers have been given the outline appearance of horses.



A postcard view of the entrance at Hvide Sande, to the large area of water of the Ringkøbing Fjord immediately behind the sand dunes.

Spree Lady nestled in behind a fishing boat in the busy commercial fishing harbour of Hvide Sande. Work and noise went on all through the night - not the most ideal of overnight stops!





Sailing under reefed main and genoa in strong, offshore winds along the same, featureless coastline for the 54 miles to the next possible safe haven at Thyborøn. I made one stop for a break around mid-day.

The wartime bunkers were one of the few things to break the monotony of the coastline. My sanity being retained by the GPS showing my gradual progress.



Arriving at Thyborøn exhausted after nearly 12 hours of demanding sailing in strong winds. There was only just enough space to manoeuvre Spree Lady through this gap.

Spree Lady storm-bound in Thyborøn for the next 2 days. There was nowhere else in the immediate area that was more sheltered. It was however much quieter away from the main part of the fishing port.





Sailing in strong winds under reefed genoa from Thyborøn into the Limfjorden, which links the North Sea with the Baltic. It had been a marginal decision as to whether to set sail in the conditions.

Approaching an area of shallow water in the middle of a large open expanse between Thyborøn and the bridge at Oddesund. This proved to be a fairly common feature of the Limfjorden.



The low road bridge before Oddesund, for which the mast needed to be lowered. This seemed a rather quicker option than waiting for the bridge to be raised.

Spree Lady moored in the most sheltered spot that could be found at Oddesund. The standard of the facilities in the harbour were very high for a small port, with even cooking facilities to prepare meals, as well as a dining area.





Sailing under the safety of genoa only (hence reason for top of container on right with camera etc being left off!) towards the road bridge before Nykøbing - this one easily high enough to sail under.

Moored behind a luxury yacht in Nykøbing. This turned out to be another less than quiet place to stop the night, as a fairground was being set up in the area behind our mooring.



Moored in the lee of the small island of Livø after a hard sail to windward. The wind was to go round later, leaving the spot totally exposed. Fortunately the two anchors set, held during the night.

Approaching the river section of the Limfjord and next road bridge at Aggersund. The centre section of the bridge was eventually raised for the only other yacht around sailing east, which had been following not too far behind.



Following the yacht for which the road bridge had been raised. Although a genoa was set, it was certainly also using its motor - I seemed to be the only boat that was actually sailing in the good breeze that was blowing.



Having stopped for a comfort break going into Aalborg, I had lost the services of the 'bridge opening yacht', making negotiating the bridges through the town more difficult.

Sailing under reefed main and genoa along the final section of the Limfjord to the Baltic. There were a number of large ships using this part of the waterway.



Stopping at a small (private) yacht club in Mou for the night, which had the most excellent of facilities. Picture taken by the crew of a classic yacht, as I looked for somewhere sheltered to tie up.



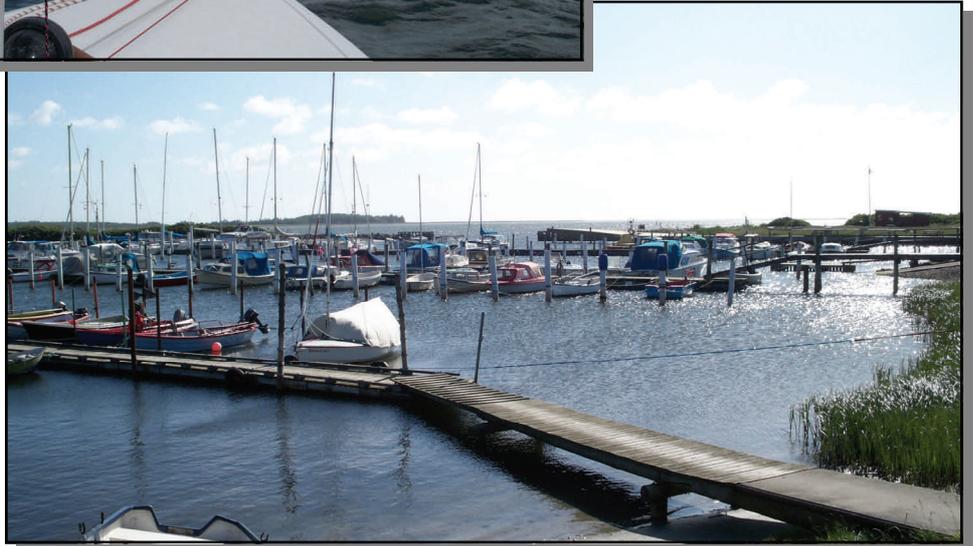
Spree Lady berthed at Mou, and with the tent erected for the night. This particular space obviously hadn't been allocated as a regular berthing spot because it would have been far too shallow for most small boats.

Space inside the tent was very limited, so sailing single-handed at least gave the great advantage of having all the available space to myself!



Heading out of the Limfjord and into the Baltic after starting off well after mid-day, following the previous day's demanding and tiring 50 mile sail, with only one stop for a break.

Berthed at Egense, having turned back from the Baltic after finding the conditions worse than had been anticipated, and still extremely tired from the previous day's sail. This was about the most sheltered spot I was able to find.





The wisdom of setting out in the very strong winds the next day was certainly more than questionable, even sailing under reefed genoa only, but there was a strong desire to make further progress along the coast.

Spree Lady, moored on a private pontoon (she can just be seen between the two cars), belonging to the small cafeteria (on right) at Als Odde.



Spree Lady, tied up at Als Odde and looking out into the Baltic from the Mariager Fjord. The owners only allowed me to stop here for the night because of the small size of my boat, they certainly wouldn't have allowed a yacht to tie up.

Spree lady, with poled out genoa, sailing out of Als Odde towards the port of Grenaa. This was the first time I had been able to use a full set of sails since starting out from Esbjerg.





Moored at Grenaa, in the marina that proved to be the most expensive, with the lowest quality of facilities and about the most presumptuous and unfriendly of all the harbour-masters ever encountered!

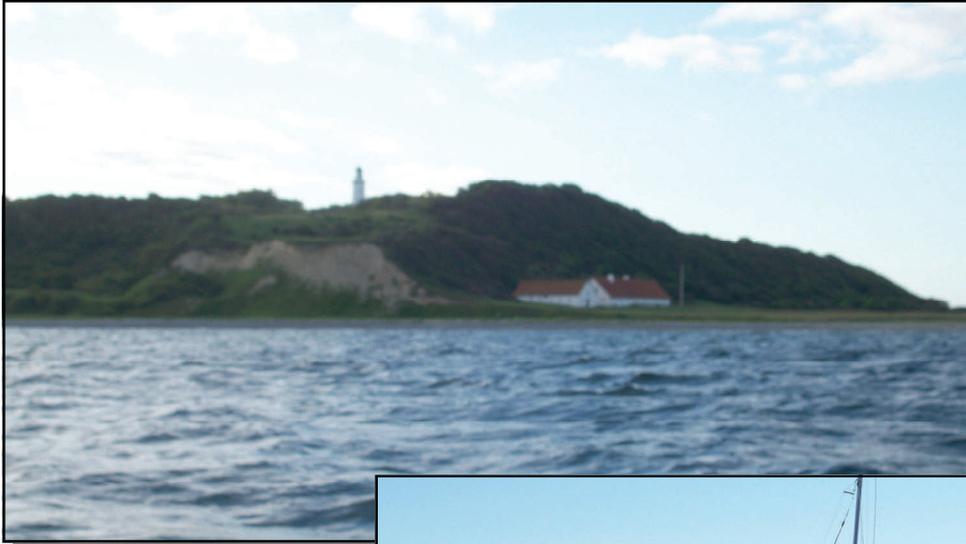
Heading for the small island of Hjelm in the lightest of breezes - my first experience during the trip of winds being too light, rather than too strong.



It was eventually necessary to use the outboard motor to make progress, as the green buoy indicated that I was drifting backwards!

Anchored in the lee of the small island of Hjelm. Nesting birds covered the shore, so landing wasn't an option. The wind strengthened and turned soon after arriving, making for another less than comfortable night.





Passing the lighthouse on Hjelm, and a large house hidden from view in the small bay I had anchored. I would have chosen to moor alongside the jetty provided for landing, had I seen it was there.

Spree Lady moored at Langør, on the island of Samsø. This spot was a little more protected than the nearby visitor's moorings, which were fully exposed.



Looking at the island of Hjelm (in the far distance). I had been kindly taken on a guided tour of the north of Samsø by a local Wayfarer sailor, Bjarne Manstrup.

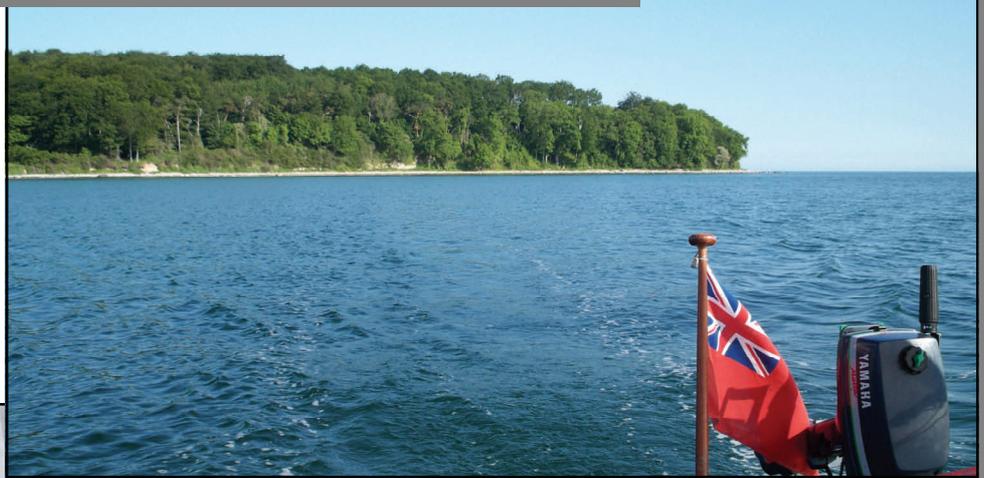
Sailing in as strong a breeze as was comfortable with no crew to the northern tip of the island of Fyn. The boat was near to planing, even though it was heavily laden with cruising gear.





Moored in the lee of a sheltered bay off the north-eastern peninsula of Fyn. It was my first night of calm at anchor, and it had also been very convenient to be able to get ashore for a walk.

Sailing off from my overnight mooring spot in perfect weather conditions, and heading for the long bridge across the Store Bælt.



Sailing toward the bridge linking the 10 miles between islands of Fyn and Sjælland. The ideal breeze made it the easiest day's sail of the trip.

There was a clearly marked channel for large yachts to pass beneath a higher span in the bridge, though this more convenient span had plenty enough height for a Wayfarer.





Spree Lady moored at Lundeberg after another long day's sail. The place was full of character, with part of the imposing building in the background housing a museum depicting the history of the fishing at the port.

These yachts were sailed by a group of Danish students touring the island. Their behaviour and seamanship were a real credit to their generation.



Sailing toward the narrowing channel between the south-eastern point of Fyn and the small island of Thurø By. This became very shallow in many places

Spree Lady tied up to a convenient jetty away from the fairly strong current through the bridge. Sailing solo made it essential to stop for the mast to be safely lowered to motor beneath it.





Almost at journey's end near Rantzausminde, with Svendborg and the bridge between the town and the smaller island of Tåsinge in the background. This photo taken by Jens Konge, whose assistance at Esbjerg made the trip possible.

Spree Lady moored to a jetty adjacent to the camping site at Rantzausminde, where the Scandinavian Wayfarer Assn. hold their annual rally.



It is the most perfect location yet found to hold a Wayfarer sailing rally. The boats can be moored within a few metres of the camping area.

With many islands and other places to sail to nearby, this is as good a sailing area as it is possible to find, though at the end of a hard solo sail, I was pleased to be able to just enjoy a complete rest.



Section 4 - Rantzausminde to
Aeroskobing & return

Date: July 2000

Time taken: 1 day

Distance covered: 21 mls

Crew: Poul Ammentorp (Denmark)



Wayfarers moored at
Rantzausminde for the
SWS annual rally.

The Danish Maritime
museum at Valdemars
Slot and the town of
Æroskobing are just
two of the destinations
from the many islands
and places named on
the map above that are
available for day trips
during the week's rally.





The morning gathering, where all those who wish to sail for the day are briefed as to the proposed destination. Usually an alternative, shorter trip along the same route is included, particularly suited for families with children.

Wayfarers setting off from Rantzausminde for the day's sail. The area of water is relatively sheltered, so it is safe to set off individually in any reasonable conditions.



The sailing conditions are not always entirely benign, particularly out in the more open waters of the outlying islands beyond Åsinge.

Landing on the beach near the harbour at Ærøskøbing. The town is popular with visiting tourists, and therefore has many interesting places to visit during a lunch-time stopover.





Poul sailing his very distinctive Wayfarer W239, with its red hull and two white diagonal stripes, through the narrow straights at Svendborg to the Danish Sailing Museum at Valdemars Slot.

Poul on the beach with his bugle to give the arriving Wayfarers a fanfare of the 'Wayfarer song'.



Wayfarers easily hauled up on the beach with many hands at Valdemars Slot - or anchored for those who prefer this option.

W950 on display in the Danish Sailing Museum at Valdemars Slot. This boat was lovingly restored by the Danish master craftsman, Lars Kristensen, a small example of whose work I have proudly fixed on the bow of my boat.





Jens Konge's daughter Kathrine, sailing his boat RAS, with her husband Niels and their daughter Mette. The rally is very much a family orientated occasion, with even the youngest children taken out for an easy sail.

Wayfarers arriving back at Rantzausminde after a day's sail to one of the many sailing destinations in the area, usually chosen to suit the prevailing winds.



A typical evening get-together at the campsite. The large tent is a relative recent addition to the event.

Poul, (far right), leading the Danish Wayfarer Stompers for an evening of great home spun entertainment, with songs mostly centred around sea shanties of both Danish and English origin. Song sheets are handed out so that all can join in.



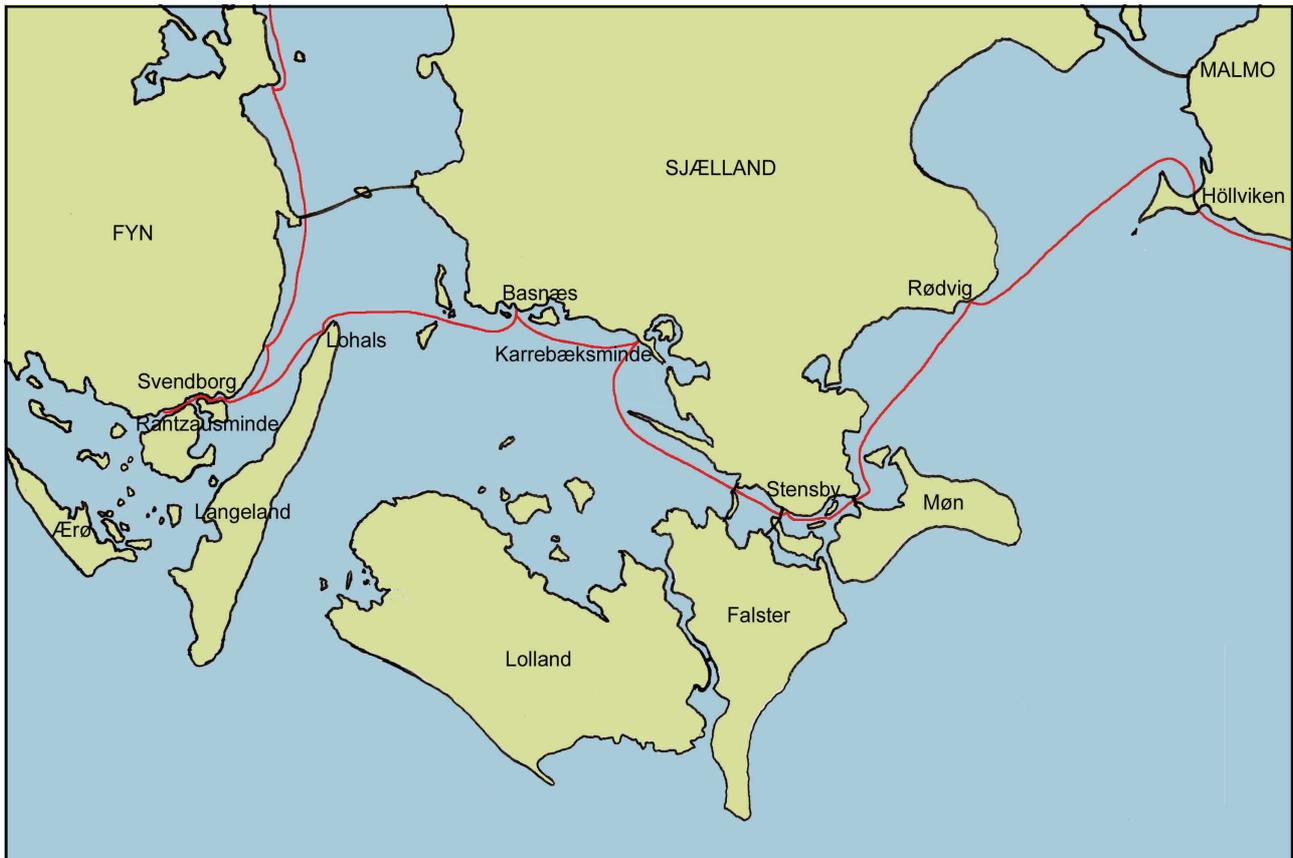
Section 5: Malmo (Höllviken) to
Svendborg (Rantzausminde)

Date: June 2000

Time taken: 6 days

Distance covered: 125 mls

Crew: Duco Pulle (Holland)



Ken Jensen, one of the founding fathers of Wayfarer sailing in Scandinavia, leading Duco's boat to a mooring post at Rantzuasminde. All visiting Wayfarers are made extremely welcome, especially any sailing in from other countries!



Arriving at the campsite, with the annual Wayfarer rally well under way, and the area reserved for the SWS event nearly full to capacity with tents. The water is shallow enough to walk out to each boat moored to a stake.

Moored in the marina at Lohals, on the long, narrow island of Langeland, (hence the name!), with Duco making the bow of his boat secure



Passing what appeared to be the Royal Danish Yacht, KDM Dannebrog, in the seas of the Store Bælt. It certainly had all the elegance of a Royal Yacht.

Motoring across an open stretch of water from the harbour at Basnæs on a windless day, with Duco standing on the foredeck on lookout duty - possibly imagining that he was the Captain of the Dannebrog, rather than his Wayfarer !





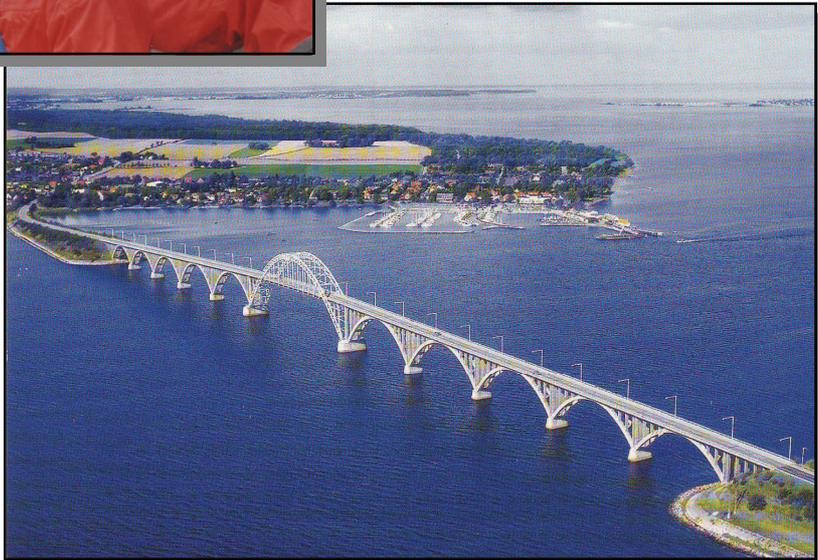
Moored in the harbour at Basnæs, on the south-eastern coast of the largest of Denmark's many islands, Sjælland. Duco also owned a yacht, which he was more used to sailing than the Wayfarer, and we seemed to motor in many situations that I would normally sail.

Motoring against the wind and using the self-steering gear with a damping system that Duco had designed and fitted himself, and was keen to test out.



Though not my idea of how best to enjoy cruising in a Wayfarer, the self-steering gear did have the advantage of being able to sit back in relative comfort to enjoy a snack.

A postcard view of the bridge linking the islands of Sjælland and Falster, with the marina at Stensby in the background, where we put in for one night. This picture has been included due the trip being done some years ago, with many of the original photos unfortunately lost.





A postcard view of the harbour and town of Rødvig, where we found ourselves stormbound for 24 hours. We spent the time making a number of improvements to the stowage systems in the boat, and enjoying the charm of this old town.

Moored in a sheltered part of the harbour at Rødvig. The facilities at the marina were excellent, and most useful to us in our somewhat cramped conditions.

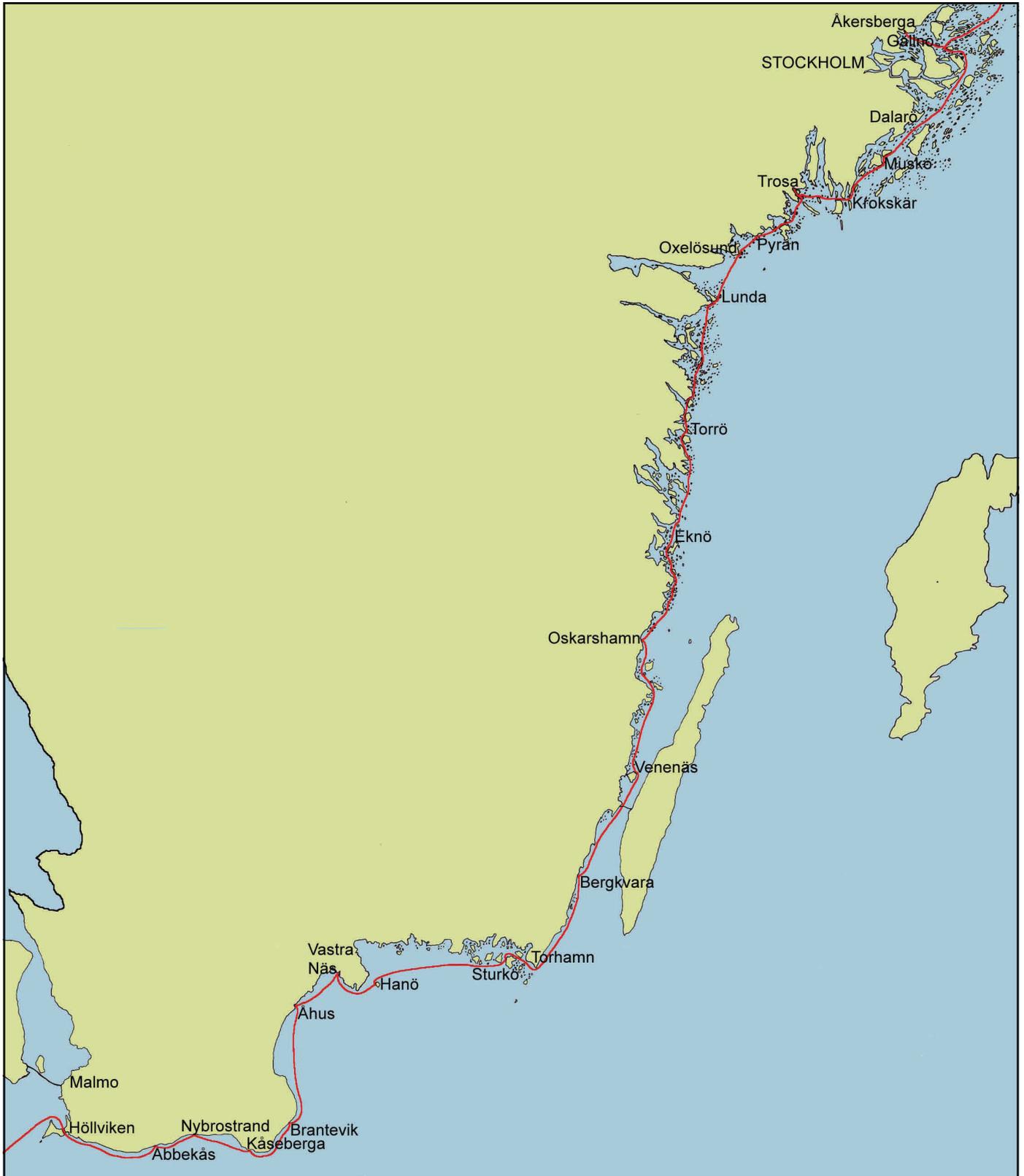


The couple on the yacht 'Elisa' rather took pity on us living under a tent on our little boat during the storm, and invited us aboard their yacht for meals.

Duco in his boat, preparing to set out from Høllviken, with his wife and daughter on the jetty to see us off. I had corresponded with Duco in my capacity as International Secretary for the Wayfarer Assn. and volunteered to crew for him for this trip.



Section 6: Malmö (Höllviken) to Stockholm (Åkersberga)



Section 6: Malmo to
Stockholm

Date: Aug 2010

Time taken: 22 Days

Distance covered: 410 mls

Crew: Kaj Landell (Finland)



Spree Lady tied up to a jetty near the launch slip at Höllviken for the start of our trip round to Stockholm. This was the longest distance I had yet sailed on a cruise.

Spree Lady fully loaded with enough provisions and gear to be fully self-sufficient for up to a week before needing to re-stock with food and water.



Looking down the canal from Höllviken, a short stretch of water that links the harbour with the southern shores of the Swedish coastline.



Kaj helping out of the southern entrance to the canal - seen in the background, with the yacht about to enter.

Passing the town of Trelleborg, with the UKWA Class Assn. pennant proudly on display.



Moored near a slip in the harbour at Abbekås, in the most sheltered spot available for the overnight stop.

Sailing away from Abbekås into the wind, which had gone round to the East. It was to prove a hard day's sail for not a lot of distance gained.





We had set out into a moderate headwind for some slow, though easy sailing, but with the wind gradually increasing during the day, it became rather necessary to seek shelter for the night near Nybrostrand.

We were very fortunate to happen upon this perfect anchorage, along an otherwise completely exposed shoreline.



A picture of the barely visible entrance to the lagoon in which we stopped overnight. Only in a Wayfarer would it be possible to get the boat over such a shallow entrance.

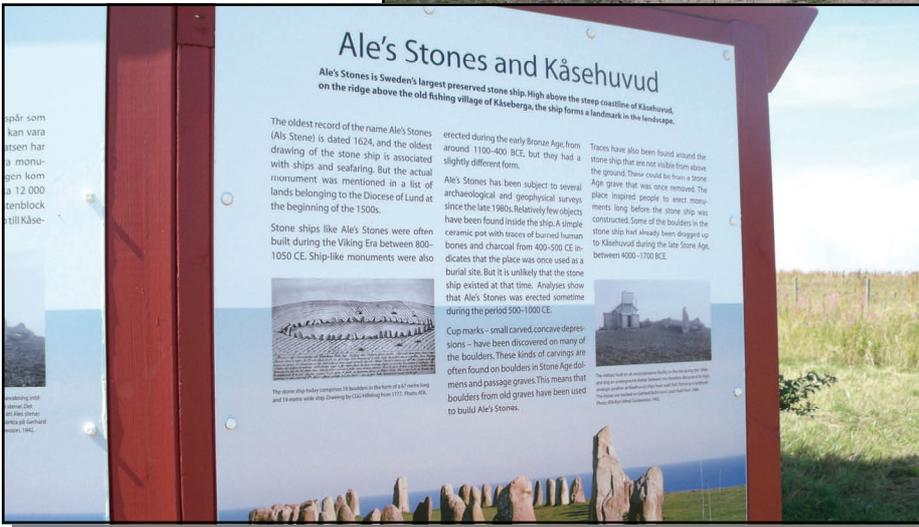
The entrance to the lagoon as (not!) seen when approaching from the sea. I only found it by looking for the flattest area of beach to haul the boat out onto. Picture taken after setting out the next morning.





A mid-day stop at Kåseberga - Spree Lady just visible along the far harbour wall. It had been recommended that we made a stop here to visit the local historical site, a short walk from the harbour.

The stone circle, which represented a Viking ship, proved to be a popular tourist attraction, with the winds from the cliff offering an alternative appeal for hang-gliders.



The entrance to the site was paved and well laid out, with detailed information to make any visit considerably more interesting.

Kaj on the helm after leaving Kåseberga, seen here rounding the south-western headland of the coastline at Sandhammaren.





Moored in the harbour at Brantevik. The wind was to change and blow near gale force the next day, for which we needed to move the boat to the more sheltered area in the background.

Kaj looking out into the Baltic during our 5Km walk to Simrishamn the next day.



Looking north over the harbour wall, on a foggy morning in Brantevik. Having looked at the harbour in Simrishamn on our walk the previous day, we had been pleased we had made the decision to stop at Brantevik.

The fog finally cleared around noon, and with the wind going round to the south again, we enjoyed a fine spinnaker run to Åhus.



Unloading Spree Lady for our overnight stop at Åhus. An almost perfectly sheltered spot was rather spoilt by the noise of the grain silos immediately opposite being in constant, 24 hour use by the 'Absolut' Vodka distillery.

Our mooring was out of sight to the left of the picture, with the visitor's moorings much more exposed on the right.



Looking towards our next destination along the coast. Strong headwinds made us decide not to set sail that day.

Sailing out from Åhus the next day in a steady, easterly breeze, though this was only to last an hour or so before the wind went round more southerly, and probably blew stronger than it did the previous day. We quickly decided to head for the nearest shelter.





Spree Lady tied up to a jetty in Vastra Näs. With nowhere very sheltered from the strong winds, (though not apparent from the photo!), we decided to move on when the wind abated slightly a few hours later.

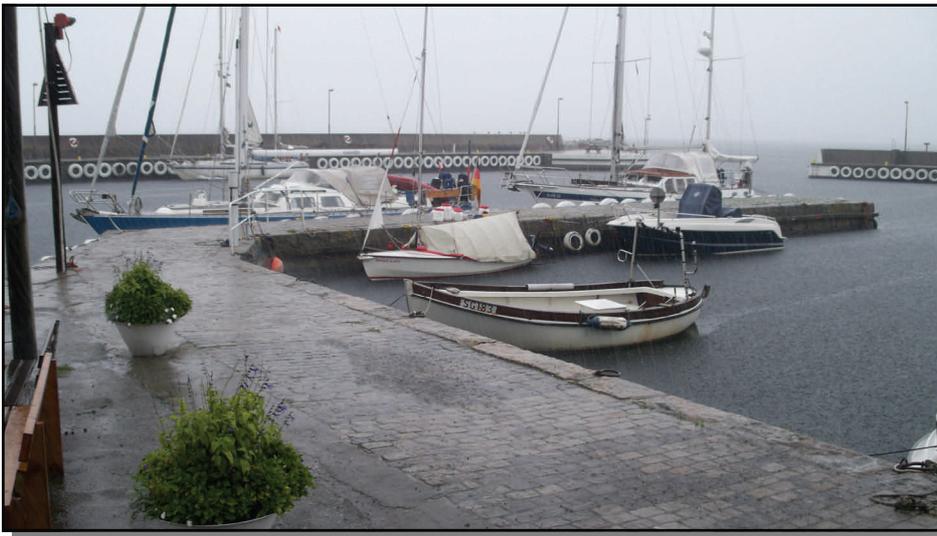
Sailing with a double reefed main and reefed genoa in strong winds and big seas to the harbour on the island of Hanö.



Approaching the harbour at Hanö. Yachts that had berthed earlier had reported how bad the conditions were out at sea, so there was some amazement at the sight of us sailing in!

Spree Lady berthed in the harbour at Hanö. Kaj was very surprised to see his dentist from Helsinki walking past the jetty soon after we arrived, and we spent a very pleasant evening aboard his yacht moored nearby.





A heavy downpour of rain the next morning made life somewhat unpleasant, but we were at least able to make the most of the excellent facilities in the harbour.

Having brightened up later, the helpful harbour-master even hoisted a Union Jack on one of the flagpoles to recognise our presence on Hanö!



Virtual armchair dinghy sailing in ideal weather conditions. Heading out from Hanö across open water to the south-eastern headland of the Swedish coast.

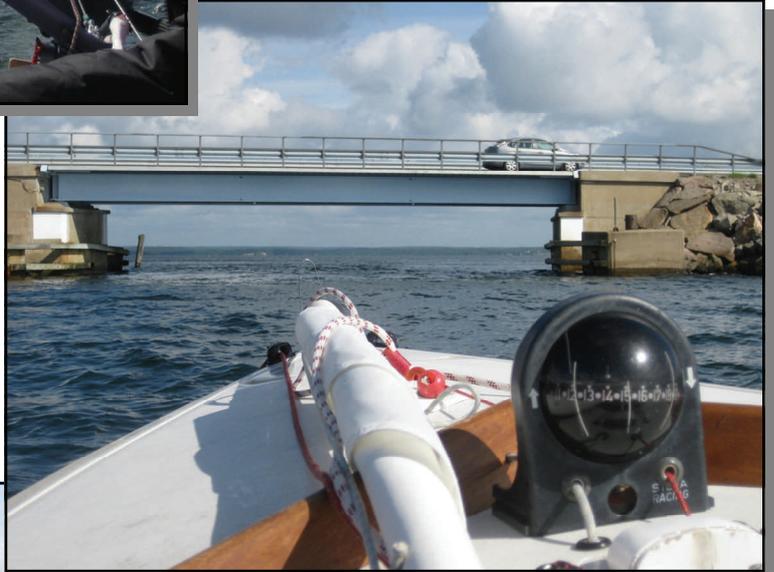
Moored up in a small (private) harbour on the island of Sturkö. Not the greatest of sheltered places to stop in the strong winds that blew through the next morning.





Motoring out of the harbour at Sturkö (seen behind), to pass under a low bridge linking the island with the one opposite, Tjurkö.

Approaching the bridge with some concern that it might be low enough to catch the top of the mast, and remove the useful wind indicator.



Though it is more usual to 'shoot' bridges without stopping, it seemed prudent to stop in the strong wind conditions. These strong winds made us choose the inshore route, rather than the exposed offshore passage outside the islands.

The second bridge, being rather higher, was much less of a problem to negotiate under sail, and we were able to raise the mast afterwards without the need to stop.





Emerging from the relative shelter of the islands into the more open waters leading to the exposed headland off Torhamn. Still with full main up at this point.

Now under reefed main and genoa and approaching the strong winds and rough seas off the headland - the Cape Wrath equivalent of the Swedish coast!



Kaj on the helm after rounding the shallow and rocky headland. I had chosen to sail between the many rocky outcrops — much to Kaj's initial consternation!

Moored in the marina at Bergkvara, where we enjoyed a really fine meal in a local restaurant. This had made a welcome change from the very basic meals we had prepared ourselves.





The very scenic lighthouse setting immediately opposite the harbour at Bergkvara, which was a well featured tourist attraction for the town.

We sailed close enough to the second set of these markers to read that it was a wildlife area from which boats were banned during the summer months!



Approaching Kalmar, and the long bridge connecting the mainland with the large island of Öland. There would be no problems getting under this bridge.

Kaj taking over the helm after passing the bridge. With a constantly strong, south-westerly wind blowing for over a week, we made great progress over a period of 7 days.





Spree Lady pulled up onto the rocky shore-line, not too far from Venenäs. The rocks were smooth enough not to cause any damage to the hull.

There were numerous outcrops of rocks along the coastline, which up to this point we had managed to avoid, but our luck ran out on this particular day, and the shallow rocky patch we hit made a small tear in the hull.



Moored in the marina at Oskarshamn. This convenient floating pontoon in a nicely sheltered area was ideal for us.

The smooth rocks on the right of the picture beyond the red marker were used to haul the bow of the boat out of the water to inspect the hull damage, and place a piece of repair tape over the tear.





Passing the Nuclear Power Station at Knarnviken, which coincides with the start of the thousands of islands that make up the Stockholm archipelago

Anchored for the night near Eknö, off one of the numerous small islands in the area.



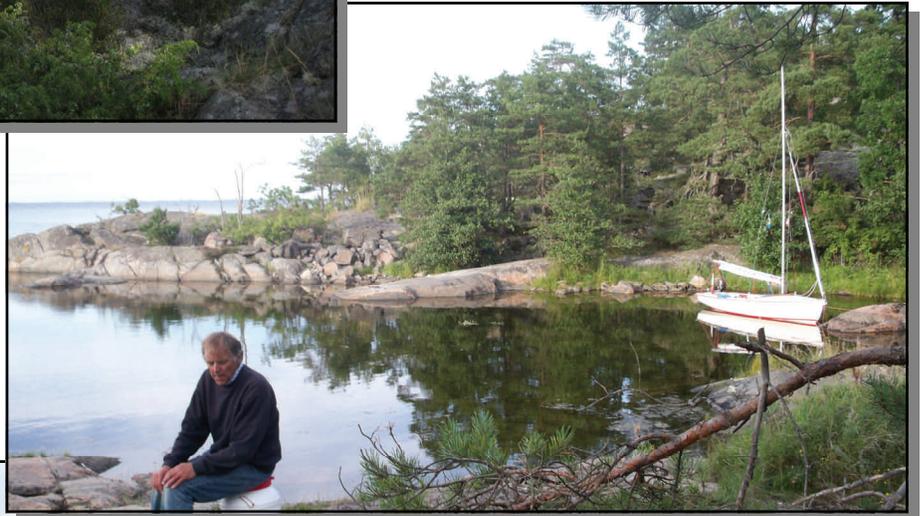
Kaj on the helm through the myriad of islands which make this area of the Baltic one of the greatest places to sail a Wayfarer that I have ever encountered.

Cruising with the spinnaker set on a glorious sunny day, this was about as perfect a day of Wayfarer cruising that it is possible to get.



Spree Lady tied up at an ideally sheltered spot on an island near Torrö, where even the sails could be left up for this (and the frontis-piece) picture to be taken.

Kaj seated at the nearby spot we had chosen to prepare and eat our main meal for the day, with this beautiful view overlooking the bay.



This cabin accommodation on the island, which was located nearby, was available for rent by any naturalists who wished to enjoy the unspoilt habitat of the island.

Heading out from Torrö in somewhat less than the perfect weather conditions that we had enjoyed the previous day.



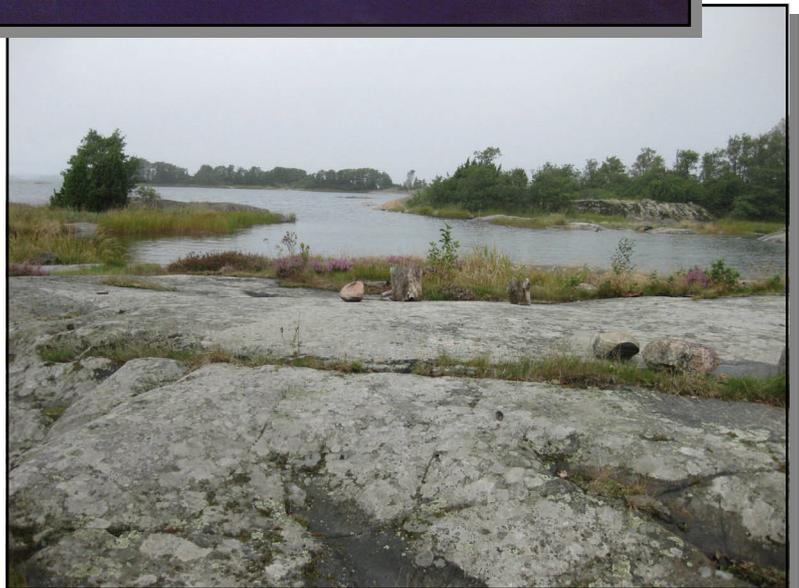


Spree Lady anchored on South Lunda, after a demanding day's sail in strong winds, having covered many more miles along the coast, making our rate of progress really quite astonishing.



A pictorial view of the 3 islands that make up Lunda. If we had realised there was such a choice of places to stop, we would have moved on from our first, less than ideal spot.

This little anchorage, which we discovered on a walk through the island, would have been a far more perfect landing spot.





Kaj helming as we crossed the open stretch of water to Oxelösund, on another day of strong winds. Sailing with one reef in the main and a reefed genoa at this point.

The wind had got up even more strongly before we had completed the crossing, causing us to put a second reef in the main - we did seem to be the only boat out at sea at that point!



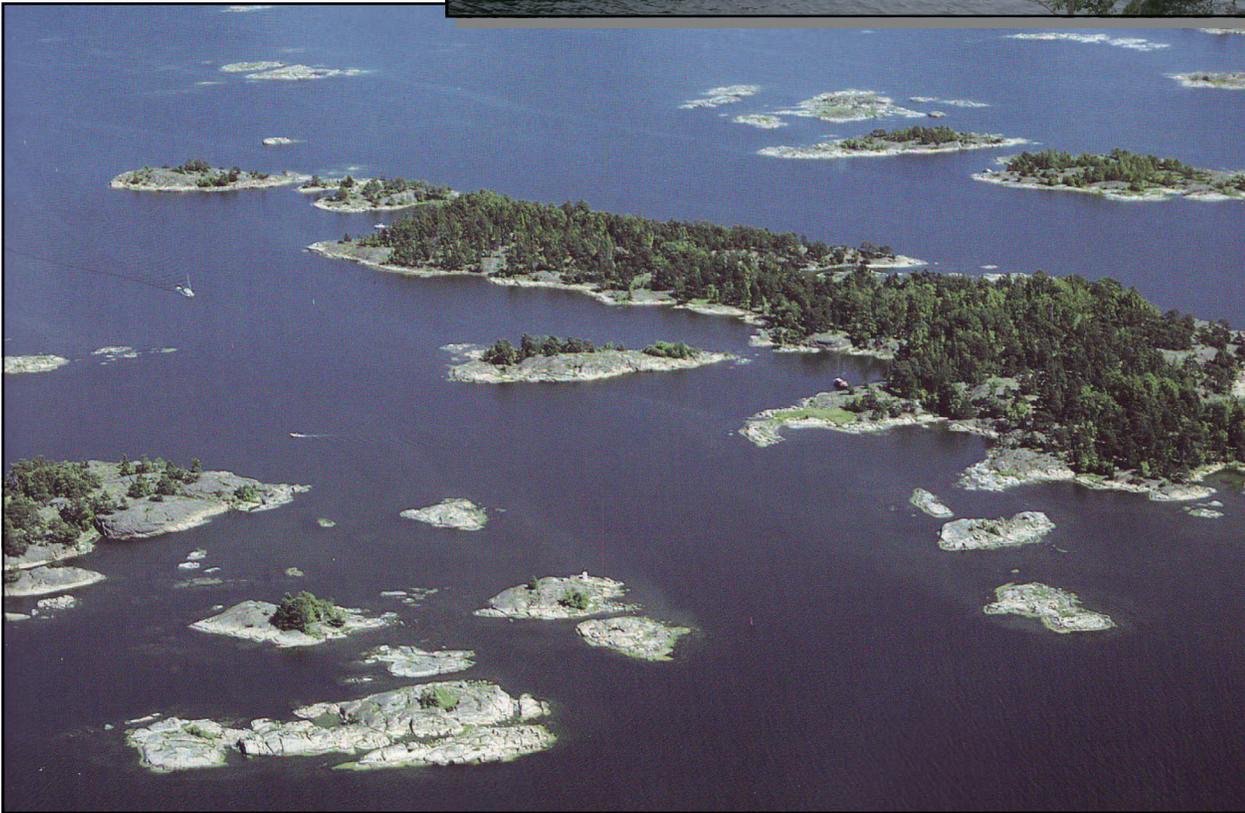
Approaching Sackholmen in the rain, and looking out for anywhere suitable to stop for the night, so we could rig the tent up for some shelter.

Navigation channels were well marked throughout the route along the coast, generally with buoys and lights, but occasionally with less usual markers, like this painted hut, though we - or more accurately, I - didn't keep to these channels when there was a shorter route available between the islands.



Spree Lady tied up in a small sheltered inlet on the island of Sackholmarna, near Pyran.

An aerial view of the island of Sackholmarna, with our overnight stopping point in the small bay at the top left of the island



Looking out to the open sea, and the equal number of small islands on the other side of the island.





Kaj, helping away from Sackholmarna, in the last of the favourable breezes we had had the immense fortune to enjoy for the previous 8 days.

Kaj using a paddle to assist us with progress in the dying breeze. We did eventually have to use the motor to reach Trosa.



Although a channel was marked on the chart between two islands, the entrance wasn't visible from any distance, and was only indicated when a motor boat appeared through a cutting.

We encountered some overhead wires not far into the channel, which we hadn't noticed to be marked on the chart. It did however give us a welcome opportunity to stop for a comfort break.



Drying out after arriving in Trosa after motoring through rain showers for much of the afternoon. This particular mooring was private, but vacant, and more sheltered than the visitors berths.

It was a great pleasure to be able enjoy a meal at a nearby cafeteria, rather than preparing yet another basic meal ourselves. We also took the opportunity to re-stock our supplies, not having had any chance to do so since Oskarshamn.



We were greeted by this cheeky House Sparrow on arrival!

Leaving Trosa under full sail, and in wind conditions that were to increase considerably during the day.



What was assumed to be an isolated rock hazard in a large area of open water, was marked in a highly original way.



From Trosa, we had needed to sail over the fairly open water of the Svärdsfjärden to the exposed headland of Krokskär

With the wind increasing and backing easterly, it proved to be a pretty uncomfortable sail by the late afternoon



We had needed to seek shelter in order to check the charts carefully to see where best to go for an overnight shelter. It was anticipated there would be somewhere to land at this small community.

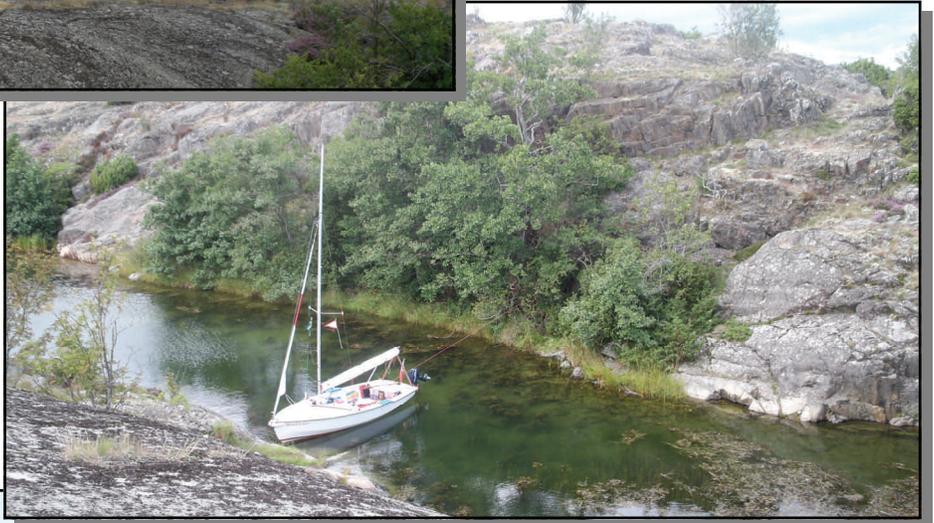
Kaj seeking advice from a local resident as to whether there were any uninhabited islands nearby where we could shelter for the night, since it wasn't generally possible to find somewhere suitable where a residence had been built.





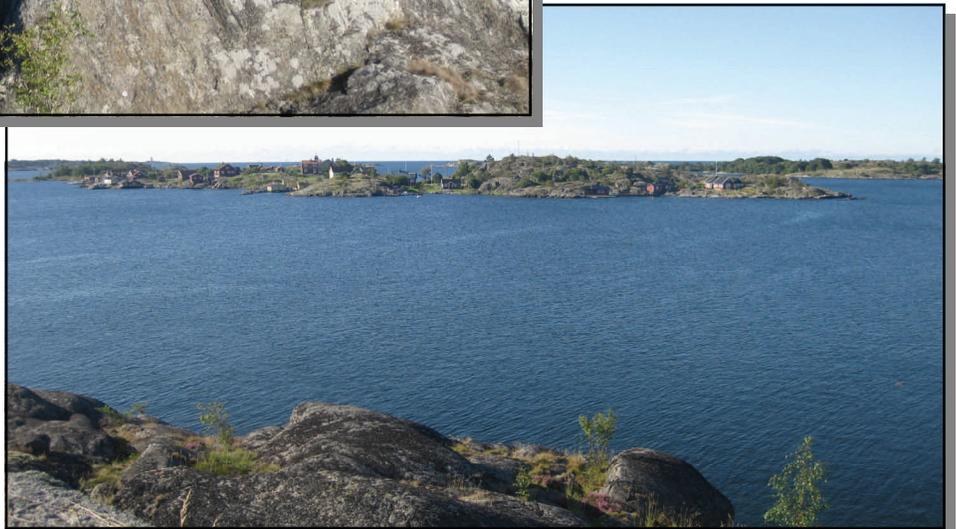
The entrance to the very sheltered lagoon on the island adjacent to Krokskär. The houses of the local community can be seen in the background. Picture taken the next morning, after the strong winds had dropped.

Spree Lady tied up in a perfect spot, sheltered from every possible wind direction. We spent the next morning exploring the island and taking in the many scenic views.



Looking back toward the mainland from the rock above our mooring spot. Navigation marks can be seen for the ferry service out to Krokskär.

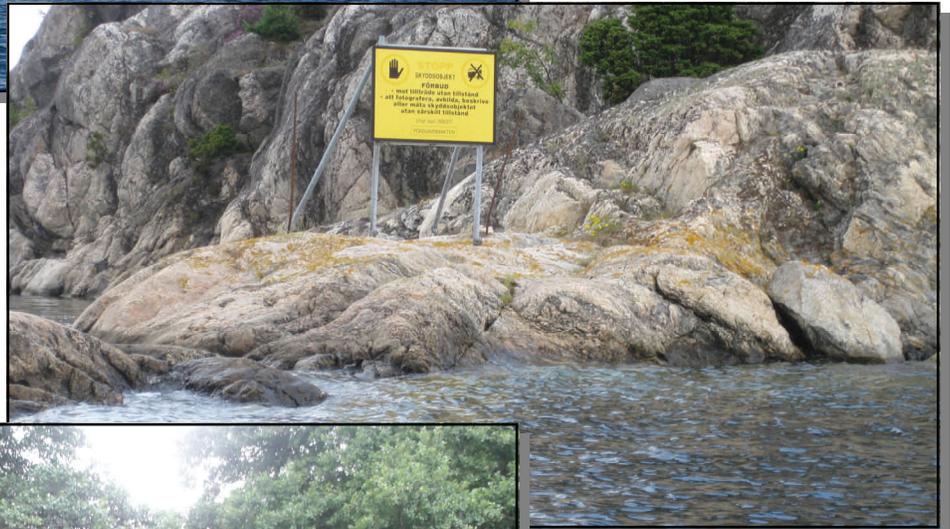
Looking out toward Krokskär and the island chain that forms the headland at the eastern end of the Krabbfjärden, beyond which is the open sea of the Baltic.





Approaching Nynäshamn with an important regatta in progress, judging from the considerable number of yachts taking part, (with only a relative few of the great fleet shown in the photo).

After Nynäshamn, the islands were a restricted military area, with almost all the landing places prohibited.



Anchored on an island near Muskö. Kaj had been very concerned about landing here, only to find a (basic) toilet amenity had even been provided at the spot.

Looking back towards Nynäshamn at the many islands along the coastline, from our overnight stopping point near Muskö. Any contact with rocks in this particular area was definitely to be avoided!



There was a gentle breeze blowing the next morning, which only got us a few miles before Kaj decided it was worth paddling to give us a little more speed.



With the wind dropping to virtually nothing, it was necessary to resort to using the outboard once more in order to reach Dalarö

Approaching Dalarö, where Kaj had stayed on a previous sail. With no shelter however, we chose to only buy a few provisions, and sail on.



Moored at a sheltered spot on a small island soon after sailing from Dalarö. It was to be our first encounter as we neared Stockholm, with the wash from passing motor vessels.



Looking west towards the main approach for boats into Stockholm. The wind had changed round to the north for the final part of our trip, making our progress much harder, and slower.

Early morning mist on our last anchorage near Gallnö. This appeared to be another ideal spot until an inter-island ferry came roaring through at full speed.



An inter-island ferry that created a considerable wash. It proved quite a problem trying to hold the boat off our 'stepping stone' rocks as it passed by the mooring above.

With no wind at all for our final day's 'sail', we had very little option other than to motor the final few miles into Åkersberga.





Passing what looks to be some extremely expensive real estate on every island in the immediate vicinity of Stockholm.

We had stopped on the nearest island to camp for the night after setting out from Åkersberga, on our sail to Helsinki the previous year.



Moored at the private, Trälhavets Båtklubb, and toasting the completion of our memorable trip.

The President of the club, Christer Fagerhall, (left) with the harbour-master, Gunnar Lundell in the clubhouse. The hospitality we received here was truly the greatest anyone could have possibly wished for.



Section 7: Stockholm (Åkersberga) to Helsinki



Section 7: Stockholm to Helsinki

Date: Aug 2009

Time taken: 25 Days

Distance covered: 320 mls

Crew: Åke Nilsson and Sten Willstrand (Sweden)



Åke Nilsson

Sten Willstrand

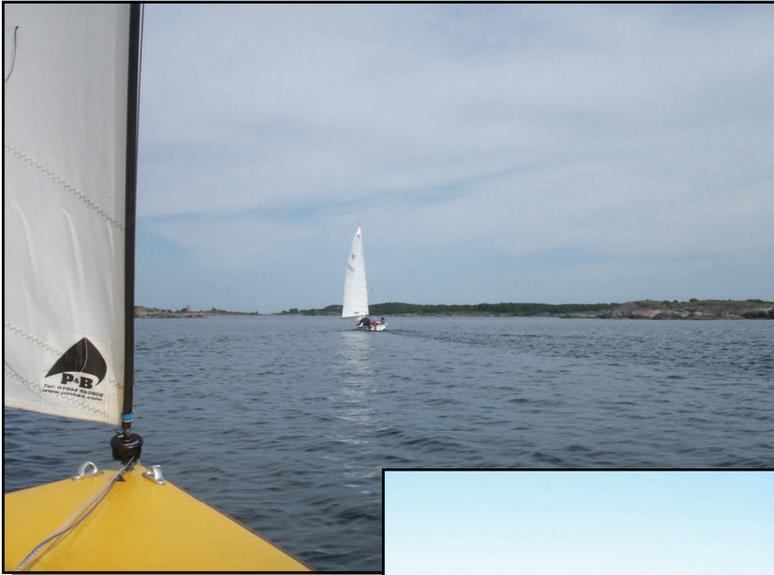


Spree Lady by the slipway after launching the boat at Trälhavets Båtklubb, with the last of the preparations being completed for the trip to Helsinki.

Setting off in the early evening after a long drive from Trollhättan, and motoring out into the Vastra Trälhavsgrund.



A small patch of a beach on the second of two islands only a few miles from Åkersberga proved to be a perfect place to haul the boats out of the water on rollers brought along for the purpose.



Spree Lady heading out toward the many thousands of islands that make up the incredible sailing area of the Stockholm Archipelago.

It quickly became a custom to celebrate the end of each day's sail with a tot of whisky.



Anchored for the night in a very sheltered inlet between two small islands near Gällnö. The small beach we encountered on our first night's stop became a rarity.

Åke and Sten erected a small land tent in which to sleep each night, whilst Martin, the skipper of the other Wayfarer and myself used our boat tents to sleep in our respective boats.





Enjoying a relaxing day's sail in the light weather conditions. Our progress was somewhat slower than had been hoped, due to the mainly easterly winds - this not being the normal weather pattern.

'Sunny Side Up' and Spree Lady moored at an idyllic spot on an island near Svarlöga. This was Wayfarer cruising of the highest perfection.



We had asked for permission to camp within sight of a house on the island opposite, but were promptly refused!

Åke carrying out his morning's ablutions, prior to breaking up camp and packing all the gear back in the boats for the day's sail. This was a fairly time-consuming ritual due to the necessity of ensuring that every item was stowed in a particular place, and carefully secured.



Sailing in the early afternoon into a light headwind toward the island of Rödloga. The weather couldn't have been more ideal, except for the wind being in the wrong direction!



Spree Lady moored at Rödloga. This was one of the few islands populated with a thriving community.

The island had both a shop and a small cafeteria, which we made the most of by enjoying a salmon sandwich lunch, well prepared by the most courteous of staff.



This communal pump provided the island's drinking water supply and we made good use of it to fill our water containers, as there had not been any previous opportunity to do so since leaving Åkersberga.

Sailing out from Rödlöga in a better breeze. We generally tried to sail reasonably close together as this made for less problems than independent navigation to any particular destination.

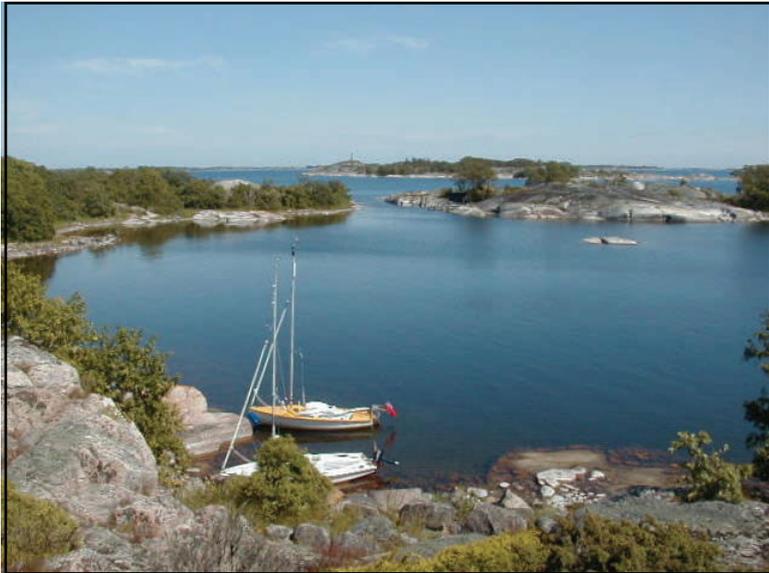


This island within the Norrpada Skägård group was almost two separate islands but for this narrow land bridge.

The approach to this protected anchorage had been shallow, but rocks we gently touched had at least been smooth!



Ake programming the next day's passage into his GPS. Martin had equipped himself with a comprehensive range of detailed charts, though even with these and a chart screen GPS, it was still far from simple to navigate through the profusion of islands.



A lunch time stop at Langoren on another perfect day for Wayfarer sailing. One was spoilt for choice by the many different possibilities of landing at sheltered and beautifully scenic places along the route.

Anchored in another idyllic setting near Hammö, our last stopping point before the sea crossing to the Finnish islands of Åland.



Setting off the next morning in flat calm seas, the propulsion at this point being provided entirely by the out-board - partially hidden in the picture above by the ensign.

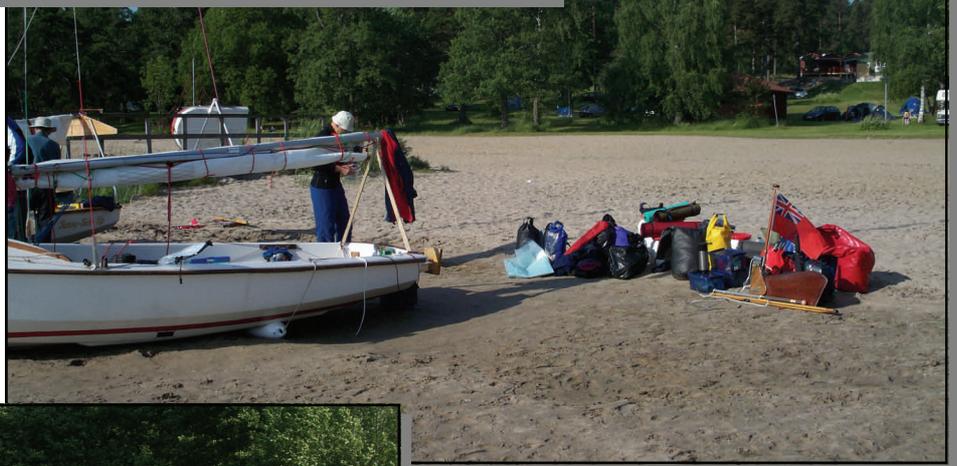
The wind did pick up in the afternoon, and provided us with an exhilarating sail into Mariehamn.





The two boats pulled out onto the beach at Mariehamn. Looking out over the large inlet of water to the east of the capital of the semi-independent region of Åland.

Åke and Sten had previously stayed at the campsite on one of their canoeing trips, so knew it would make an ideal base for our 2-day stopover.



The many items of cruising gear stored away securely in Spree Lady, and unloaded from the boat in order to lighten the weight to pull the boat ashore.

The tall ship 'Pommern', an old trading vessel on permanent display as a historical museum in the harbour of Mariehamn. This was just one of the many interesting features of the city, there were also many excellent restaurants, which we made the most of during our stay.



Spree Lady, with Sten as crew, setting out from Mariehamn in a good breeze, which quickly caused a reef to be put in the main shortly after leaving the protection of the land. This picture taken by Nigel Talbot, Commodore of the Royal Victoria Y.C. at Fishbourne, on the Isle of Wight, who was staying at Mariehamn for the Inter-island games festival, to support his son in the sailing event. I had been searching for somewhere to hold the next International Wayfarer Rally in 2010, and it seemed quite amazing that I should find the solution in Finland!



A lunchtime stop in a tranquil anchorage on one of the small islands near Rödhamn.

Looking back towards Mariehamn and a view of the many channels between the islands that made sailing out of the main navigation routes much more interesting.



The two boats anchored off a sheltered inlet on the island of Bergskär. With numerous islands to sail between, there was no shortage of places to stop for the night.

A stop at Vidskär amongst a myriad of islands. There wasn't too much danger of hitting submerged rocks when navigating between the islands, since it was possible to see any rocks just below the surface.



Looking out over the Baltic at the diminishing number of the reputed 90,000 islands between Stockholm and Helsinki.

Sailing towards Kökar, on one of only two occasions we had the wind directly behind us to be able to fly our spinnakers



Observing nature's own 'Picasso' like artwork in the rocks along the shoreline of Alskär - just one of many examples on the islands along this part of the route.



Moored at another idyllic anchorage near Borstö, one of the only places where we found another yacht also anchored, a 100 metres further along the shoreline.

A typical view to wake up to and savour in the early morning, and made even more pleasurable with a freshly brewed cup of tea!



Ghosting into a sheltered shore, on a small island near Hitislandet, with Åke wading out to pull the boat ashore.

Åke and Sten sailing Spree Lady towards Hanko. Sten, seen studying the chart, proved to be an ace navigator. He and Åke had canoed the area together as part of a larger group, and they proved to be the most perfect of crew.





Åke and Sten packing the re-stocked provisions purchased at the nearest supermarket in Hanko (about 1/2 Km away - hence the trolley, which Åke did return).

A big annual regatta was taking place when we arrived, and with the noise and rowdy behaviour of the younger competitors in the harbour area, we couldn't get away fast enough to return to the peace and tranquillity we had previously experienced.

We managed to find this secluded anchorage a few miles out from Hanko.



Looking out from the same anchorage spot eastwards at the main navigation channel that was well marked to indicate a safe water route, mainly for pleasure craft.

Sailing the next day along the navigation channel, being very near to the end of the sailing season for this far north of the Baltic, there were many yachts and motor boats heading back westwards to their wintering destination.





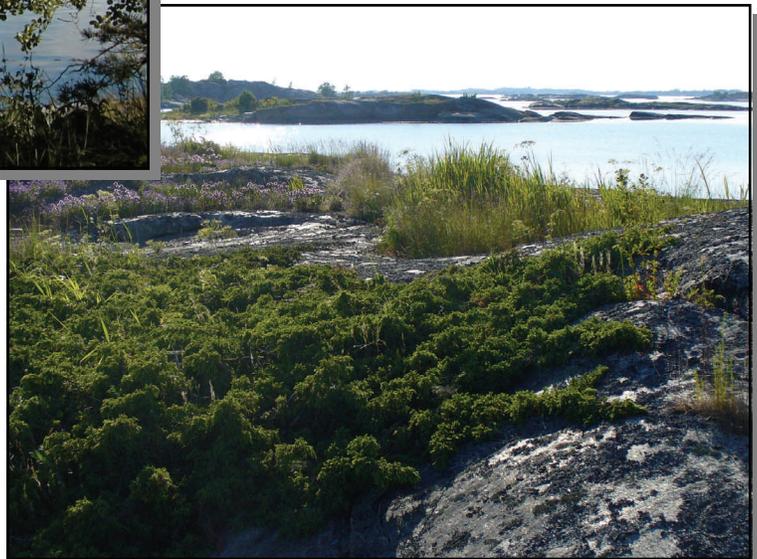
We sailed through this narrow gap between two islands - having first checked that there was sufficient water. The yachts and motor boats keeping to the channel seemed to be watching with great interest - and possibly with envy!

The reward of being able to sail through the gap was the opportunity to moor at yet another idyllic spot for a lunchtime break.



This picture probably best epitomises just what an incredibly beautiful area the region is to explore in a Wayfarer, particularly as it is possible to sail into places unreachable by larger yachts.

Looking out over the Baltic and the numerous islands to sail around and between, making it so important to keep a careful check on navigating out of the marked channels. A GPS with a chart display, as well as a compass, are virtually essential items of equipment.



The two boats typically anchored off rocks that provided such an easy way of stepping ashore, with a nearby flattish area to use for cooking a meal, as well as somewhere for Åke and Sten to erect their tent.



'Sunny Side Up' sailing into a sheltered mooring spot that was always easy to find for either a lunch or night time stop-over. On a cruise along any other coast, one could expect to take an hour or more to find such a suitable spot.

Anchored at a sheltered spot near Bagaskär for gale force winds forecast the next day. It was to be the first time the weather had stopped us sailing.



Stormbound at Bagaskär, with little else to do but sit in our tents and pass the time away by reading etc. We had been fortunate however to have had the opportunity of walking around the island during the morning, before the weather had started to deteriorate.

Moored at our next overnight stop at Porkkala, where another, rather more ferocious gale kept us stormbound for over 48 hours, though we were at least able to use the facilities of the shop, sauna and restaurant here.



Sitting in the cafeteria part of the small shop, enjoying a morning cup of coffee during our enforced stay in Porkkala. It was whilst we were here that we met up with two Finnish sailors, who were interested in the concept of such small boats cruising along the coastline.

The winds did not abate until well into the afternoon on the second day, so we were fortunate to find this anchorage nearby.



This was a public amenity island, owned by the town of Esbo, near Helsinki, on which there was a protected anchorage for visiting yachts with some basic toilet facilities and BBQ areas. We made the most of the opportunity to walk around the island in the evening.



Hauled up on a beach of another amenity island near Suvisaaristo, our last stop before Helsinki. There had been few other places to land this near to the outlying suburbs of the metropolis, as homes, usually holiday ones, had been built at every convenient landing point.

Sailing in strong, onshore winds under reefed main and genoa on the last section of open water to Helsinki. Sten on the helm, and though not the most experienced of sailors, coping very admirably in the conditions.



Tied up to a jetty on the island of Rönnskär, a public amenity island owned by the city of Helsinki, and toasting the successful completion of our cruise.

Moored in a quiet lagoon off the main harbour area of Rönnskär. We camped here whilst waiting for Åke and Martin, who returned to Stockholm by ferry to pick up the cars and trailers.



