

FOUR BLUES AND A WHITE



THE STORY OF THE NORWEGIAN RALLY 2010

By Peter Manning

You may be wondering what the title of this rally report is all about. Read on and all will be revealed. Our fourth Norwegian rally was held over the weekend of 7th and 8th August 2010 with a skippers day intended to be held on Friday 6th August.

The rally was once again held at the Lundsvagen batforening on the small island of Hundvag just outside Stavanger with the kind permission of the members of the club. In Norway many boat clubs are privately owned by their members and built on land rented from the towns in which they are situated. Boating is encouraged in Norway. It is an important means of travel since trying to get from one town to another by road may involve many miles going round the fjords whilst sailing to the same destination is only a short distance away and takes much less time. Consequently there are many ferries. I am told there are fast ferries, medium speed ferries and slow ferries. Which you use depends upon how quickly you want to get to your destination and how much you want to pay.

You can visit Stavanger in your boat to do the weekly shopping. On arrival you park (moor) your boat in the centre of the town, collect a 'pay and display' ticket from the machine at the side of the water, display it in a prominent position and do your shopping. What a wonderfully refreshing way of life. I am pleased to say I did not see any 'boat' wardens. Hopefully they don't exist.

We were expecting six boats at this years rally but sadly Alan and Gloria Parsons in '*Badger*' did not make it. Bad weather prevented them getting to the Holy Loch rally in Sotland in July which was on route and this meant there was insufficient time to get to Norway. Nonetheless we still had five boats. Arne Kverneland in '*Johanna*', Svein Magnus Ueland in '*Samson*' and Havard Hjertvik in '*Malena*' all three of which are kept at the Lundsvagen batforening were joined by Ketil Greve who keeps his boat '*Edmund Dantes*' at Stavanger and Sebastian Hentschal and family in '*Peregrine*' who were on the final leg of their summer cruise before returning to Germany after the rally.



By now you should have guessed what the title of this rally report means. The suggestion came from Arne who I think may have been watching too many films during his recent enforced absence from sailing. Good to see you back to your usual self Arne.

During the lead up to this rally a little rivalry emerged between *Johanna* and *Edmund Dantes*. Apparently the two boats are quite well matched with *Edmond Dantes* performing better in stronger winds and *Johanna* in lighter winds. Of course both boats sport cambered sails designed by Arne and the hulls are of a similar size although of slightly different profiles. At the last Norwegian rally held in 2008 honours went to *Edmund Dantes* (Arne claims the lights winds were to blame). This year a revitalized Arne decided to take no chances so a week or two before the rally *Johanna* was slipped, her bottom scrubbed and antifouled and returned to the water ready for action. However, word must have got around as on the Saturday morning before many had risen a wet suited figure was seen to quietly slip into the water armed with scraper and feverishly attempt to remove as many barnacles as possible from the hull of *Malena*. For those of you who do not know but *Malena* used to be owned by Arne and on which he developed his first cambered sail. This boat was until recently owned by Havard Hjertvik and it was he who was cleaning her bottom. So this was to be a three boat contest.

Seven Brits decided to fly to Stavanger on the Thursday evening with the intention of making a longer weekend or in some cases a longer week to spend a little time sightseeing. We arrived just before midnight and ordered a mini bus to get to Hundvag. Ketil had warned us that many Stavanger taxi drivers had decided to go globe trotting as indeed it appears had those from other countries some of whom ended up in Norway. Now taxi drivers in Stavanger are either Polish or Etheopian with limited language skills as we were to find out. Our mini bus driver, an Etheopian, was very pleasant but with poor navigational skills. Although he was given the address and had a GPS he struggled to get his bearings. He eventually got us to Hundvag but could not grasp the concept of a circular road round the island and did not know which way to turn. He had already spoken to his boss who thankfully told him to turn the meter off thus saving us from becoming bankrupt even before we got to the boats. Fortunately for us Steve Peake remembered the way and held the drivers hand (metaphorically of course). We eventually arrived at the Lundsvagen batforening, tired but happy that we had arrived before sunrise.

After a good but relatively short nights sleep we sorted ourselves out and planned the day ahead. As Friday was to be the skippers day we expected them to want to sail on *Peregrine*. Unfortunately Sebastian had to resolve an issue about his dog coming to Norway on the boat and had to leave. In the event Arne very kindly offered to take some of us sailing. Steve and Sally Peake and Edward Hooper accepted his offer whilst the rest of us went into Stavanger for a look around.

During our walk up to the bus stop we came across this rather splendid sailing ship owned and sailed by a local resident and across the water a view of the marina we were staying at.



Food and drink are expensive in Norway as we were to find out. Two bowls of mussels and a couple of beers cost two of our party £50 – ouch! and a bowl of pasta, a beefburger, potatoes and salad and two cups of tea cost me a hefty £35 – not exactly painless. That said buying food in the local supermarket seemed to be a little cheaper than on our last visit and we managed to have a very good barbecue at reasonable cost. It is not that everything is really expensive in Norway it just seems that way. A job in the UK paying around £30k would pay around £50k in Norway. I must say that I would rather be a Norwegian visiting Britain than a Brit visiting Norway.



Whilst walking around Stavanger we came across this rather wonderful example of a Colin Archer design yacht in great condition.

Colin Archer was a Norwegian naval architect. His Scottish parents moved to Norway six years before he was born. He is world famous for designing many very seaworthy boats including pilot boats and rescue cutters. He died in 1921 aged 89 by which time he had

built over 200 ships, 70 yachts, 60 pilot boats, 14 rescue cutters and 72 other vessels. I wonder if he was ever inspired to fit a junk rig to any of his craft!

We were given access to the clubhouse on Friday evening when Svein Magnus's wife very kindly brought us a wonderful fish supper. Thank you Inger and Svein Magnus

Saturday saw the start of the rally proper and brought with it a cloudy but dry day with a good F4/5 sailing breeze in the morning. The clubhouse was open as members and friends arrived. After introductions, coffee and being allocated to boats we all went sailing.





It is said that the junk sail, unlike its Bermudian Counterpart, can perform just as well when full of Holes. We don't often get the chance to see the proof of this. However, at this rally we had the chance. Malena's sail now some 16 years old had suffered substantial degradation and was to say the least rather tattered. Notwithstanding, she seemed to perform just as well as Johanna as the following photograph shows. Just look at the bow wave on the second photograph. Now you don't get that with a worn Bermudan sail, do you!



As we now have the use of the clubhouse for the period of the rally we decided to return there for lunch and also to change crews. Whenever we can we try and ensure everyone at our rallies sail on all the boats or at least those of their choice.

At previous rallies Sally Peake has proved herself to be a most effective at catching mackerel. At our last Norwegian rally in 2008 she and others caught enough fish for our barbecue so we had great expectations this time. However, the secret to successful mackerel fishing is to sail slowly towing the lures. With a F4/5 wind blowing it proved almost impossible to sail slowly and at her first attempt

before lunch Sally returned with an empty bucket. Not to be beaten, she set out again in the afternoon with gritty determination.

After a pleasant lunch crews were allocated to the boats for the afternoon sail, this time with a little less wind although still blowing a low F4 for some afternoon sailing. Hopes were high that Sally would find the missing shoals of mackerel for the evening barbecue. However, before joining the boats the obligatory group photograph had to be taken.





Despite Sally's best efforts she returned from the afternoons sail with only 2 fishes (and no bread!) The wind had not abated sufficiently to allow the boats to drift or even sail slowly and it appears Norwegian mackerel are not turbo-charged. With no food for the barbecue a shopping party was hastily gathered and off we went to the supermarket.

Whilst the men rested and engaged in convivial chat the ladies retired to the kitchen and a few hours later a feast fit for kings emerged. As the wind was still blowing quite strongly finding a suitably sheltered place to light the barbecue proved a little challenging. We had to be careful as the clubhouse is a wooden building. Consequently we set up a barbecue watch to ensure that embers from it did not cause any problems.

Svein Magnus's wife Inger joined us for the evening and brought with her a delicious apple dessert. Thank you, Inger, from us all.

We had been fortunate with the weather up until now. It was therefore inevitable that if there was to be any rain it would fall whilst we were barbecuing. Fortunately it did not last long and did not spoil our enjoyment.

Alcohol is very expensive in Norway so on our outward journey we purchased some boxes of wine to help the food go down. This was much appreciated by everyone.

At the last Norwegian rally and again this year Arne provided set up his computer with a data projector and talked us through many of the photographs he has in his collection. Thanks Arne. You have a wicked sense of humour. (I refer to the photo of me about to go for a swim in 2008 – not the most flattering – but I forgive you- just)

It has become a tradition at this rally, led by Ketil Greve on our first rally, to have an early morning swim. The water in the fjords can be surprisingly warm in August especially after a period of sunshine. This year we went fully expecting to have an early morning dip. However, there was an ominous presence in the water this year, a profusion of jellyfish. Whilst they have been present in previous years they were not seen around the boats. Of the Brits, only Sally Peake was brave enough to have a dip on Friday morning and although she said she saw no jellyfish, she emerged from the water having been stung. This was enough to put the rest of us Brits off swimming for this rally. Pity really as an early morning dip is very stimulating and a wonderful start to the day.

We woke on Sunday morning to very calm conditions and after breakfast and the arrival of members staying in hotels we boarded the boats. Unfortunately we could only sail for a few hours as one skipper had to leave early and *Peregrine* had to depart in the afternoon to start her return trip to Germany.

By the time we got on the water the wind had reached about F2 and rising.



Photo by Andrew Bailey



Photo by Andrew bailey



The Lundsvagen Batforening on Hundvag is situated in a very picturesque area. As the boats wait for each other coming out from the marina there is a chance to look at the local scenery from the water.





Photo by Andrew Bailey

After enjoying some sailing in company and providing plenty of photographic opportunities we returned to the clubhouse for lunch. Whilst out sailing Sebastian, on board *Peregrine*, discovered he had a problem with the halyard and could not raise and lower the sail easily. Not wanting to set sail and risk a serious problem at sea, he decided to investigate. This meant climbing to the top of the mast. The problem was soon identified – a broken sheave. Fortunately he had a replacement which he was able to fit.

Whilst Sebastian was getting ready to depart Arne and Ketil offered to take anybody interested for one final sail to accompany *Peregrine* towards the open sea for as long as time would permit. After saying farewell to everyone, *Peregrine*, *Johanna* and *Edmund Dantes* set sail. Some of those left behind chose to go for a walk and explore a little bit of the island



The return of *Johanna* and *Edmund Dantes* signalled the end of the official part of the rally. Some members had to leave said their farewells and started their homeward journey. Some of the members who had flown from the UK and a couple from Germany planned to stay on in Norway for a few days holiday whilst others were not due to fly out until Monday. There was still some food left over from Saturday's barbecue so the girls got together and made up some dishes for our evening meal. There was even some of Inger's lovely dessert left over washed down with the last of the wine.

On Monday those of us left got up early, made sure the boats and the clubhouse were left clean and tidy and bade our farewells. Four of us were flying back to the UK in the evening so made our way into Stavanger for a further look around. There is a part of Stavanger which is called the Old Town and included a sardine museum. There are also a series of very pretty wooden houses which are well maintained and provide an insight of how Stavanger may have looked many years ago.



There is also a very interesting oil museum and maritime museum to help pass the time whilst waiting for our return flight home.

We decided we had to leave Stavanger just after 1600 hrs to go to the airport. We thought we had got on the correct bus as, when asked, the driver said he was going via the airport and for a while this appeared the case or so the signs indicated. Suddenly, and just a few miles short of the airport the driver turned off onto an industrial estate, drove around it without stopping, arriving back at the main road we had just left, but instead of carrying on to the airport he turned back the way we had just come from. This sort of got us worried. We already knew of that many taxi drivers were not local and now it seemed we may have a foreign bus driver as well, and so it turned out. When asked why he was not taking us to the airport he indicated that he thought we wanted the port, seaport that is not the airport hence our trip round an industrial estate. Now he was going back to Stavanger and promptly stopped to pick up passengers. We tried using a local to talk to him but he was resolute and ordered us off his bus. We had no choice but to get off. He left us stranded on the main road, the 501, not knowing where we were. We knew in which direction the airport lay but that was too far to walk. We were stuck up the proverbial creek and without a paddle. We did however have one card. Svein Magnus had very kindly agreed to take our luggage at the clubhouse and bring it back to us at the airport as he lives close by. Did anyone have his telephone number? Fortunately yes. However, how do you tell someone where you are when you don't know yourself. We could tell him which road we were on and that we were at a roundabout but that was about it. There were a few buildings which we described. After a few minutes Svein Magnus said he thought he knew where we were and would come for us. We had a few anxious minutes wait before we saw his car heading our way. What a relief. Reunited with our

luggage and now at the airport we said a very grateful farewell to Svein Magnus and awaited our flight home.

This, our fourth Norwegian rally has been one of the best yet. It was great to see and chat with visitors from other countries and we all had a thoroughly enjoyable time. Our thanks and appreciation go to our hosts at the Lundsvagen Batforening for allowing us to use their facilities but particularly to Arne, Svein Magnus, Ketil and Havard for their generosity in giving us their time and allowing us to use their boats for accommodation.

Peter Manning

Rally Organiser

Post script.

Arne has just reminded me (rather cruelly I think) that not everything in Norway is expensive. His well maintained berth costs him 4400 Norwegian kroner – about £440. My berthing fees are £2400 in the UK – about 24,000 Norwegian kroner. I don't suppose you have a spare berth for *Malliemac* Arne???

The facilities at the Lundsvagen Batforening are excellent. Thanks for the photo Arne!

