



2009

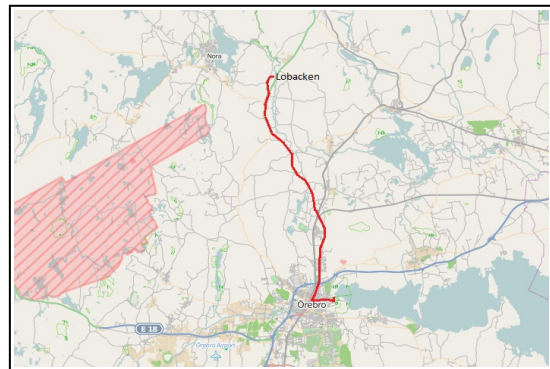


The inland waterways to Åland

Lake Hjälmaren, Mälaren, Åland and Örebro by Johan Kjellander 2014



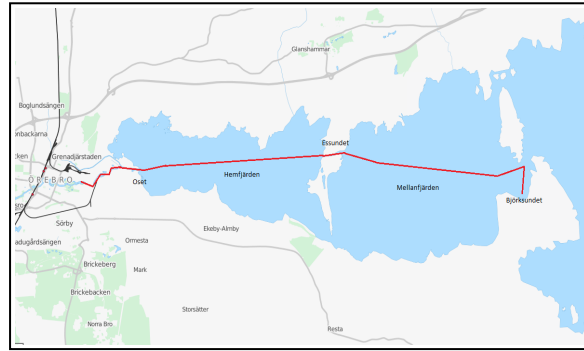
Ten years after we sold Lynx it was finally time to go to sea again. This time with Bird of Passage. We still had no rig but we wanted to get her into the water so we could test the machinery and all other technical stuff. The rig had to wait until next year.



The trip started in Lobacken, 30 kilometers north of Örebro. Tommy drove the tractor and Bernt drove the follow car.



We launched on the 26:th of June in Skebäck marina, Örebro and after a few days it was time for the first trip out on lake Hjälmaren.



As you leave Örebro and enter Hemfjärden you have *Oset* on your starboard side.



Oset is a bird sanctuary and here you can sometimes have the pleasure to see a White Tailed Eagle hovering. Can you see it ?



After passing Essundet you enter Mellanfjärden and one of the first things you see is this wind turbine. You can judge the size by comparing with the height of the trees below !



Here is Gustav, now 16 years old, sitting at the foot of the 2 MW wind turbine in Björksundet (Strait of Birch).



Göksholms Castle, photo by U92, © CC-BY 1.0

Björksundet is the last straight before you enter the central part of lake Hjälmaren. This means that you have to pass here if you want to travel by sea between Stockholm and Örebro. In old times this was an important place and it is not surprising to find a castle here. The oldest parts of Göksholms Castle are from the 13:th century and it's the oldest privately owned castle in Sweden still used by their owners.



Sweden, Norway and Denmark signed a treaty 1397 to form a political union (Kalmarunionen) and act together in the defence against the Germans. For some reason Denmark became a dominant part in the union and placed lords in Sweden to collect taxes. This was not appreciated by the ordinary people and when Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson asked them to join him in a rebellion they said yes.

In 1434 they threw the Danish out and the year after Engelbrekt organized what was going to become the first parliament in Swedish history, Arboga möte. If it were not for the owner of Göksholms slott, he would maybe been elected King but on his way from Örebro to Stockholm 1436 he was murdered in Björksundet by the owner of the castle who was still loyal with the Danish. After this, Engelbrekt became a hero who is still remembered in many places in Sweden. The picture above shows the monument where he was killed.



Lake Hjälmaren is very beautiful and full of life. Here is a heron in Björksundet harbour...



...and here is a sundown picture taken in Björksundet 10 NM east of Örebro.



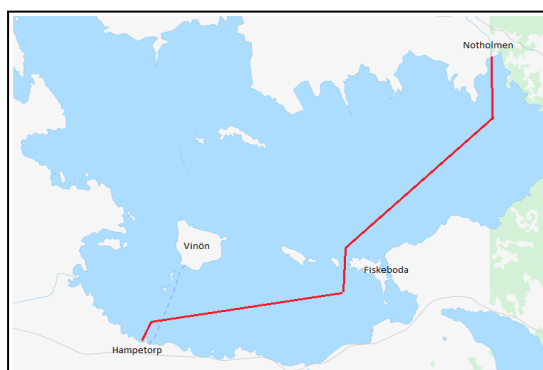
There are several yacht clubs in Hjälmaren. For many years we have been members of SHB (South Hjälmarens Boatclub) located in Hampetorp, about 20 NM from Örebro.



Kjellander family having a traditional Mid Summer meal in Hampetorp with *sill* (marinated raw herring) and fresh potatoes. Tove is behind the camera.



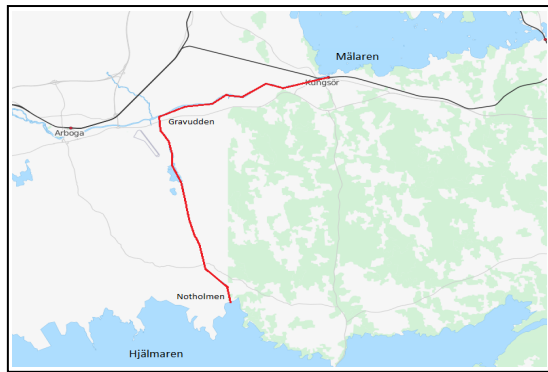
The beautiful schooner to the left is a RJ140 owned by our friends Krister and Lotta in Hampetorp. 2011-2012 they sailed to the Caribbean and back. The boat to the right is a S30, a modern 30 square meter skerry cruiser owned by Sven-Gunnar and Annika, also old friends of us.



After having tested Bird of Passage on lake Hjälmaren with good results, we decided to take her on a longer trip, to Åland. For the first time Bird of Passage was now going to pass Hjälmare Canal.



Here she is, waiting for the first lock to open in Notholmen. Hjälmare Canal has been in use since 1640 ! One of the oldest in Europe. I know that Canal du Midi in south France is also one of the oldest.



There are nine locks in Hjälmare Canal, all manual. The lock keeper will appreciate if you can spare a crew or two to help him handle the gates. The canal ends at Gravudden and from there you follow Arboga river to Kungsör by lake Mälaren.

Lake Mälaren to Stockholm



We usually try to pass through Hjälmare Canal early enough to reach Kungsör before the evening. A night in Kungsör and the next day you can do some shopping before you continue towards Stockholm. Here is a nice picture from a calm lake Mälaren. Bird of Passage is on autopilot and the

skipper is walking around on deck to check things out. With a completely new boat there is so much to think about...



On our way through Mälaren we often make a stop on Björkö to visit the remains of the old viking city Birka. Here is a view down over the harbour where we spent the night together with our friends Tommy and Gunilla in their Nauticat 33, Lorette.



This time we took a walk to the Ansgar Chapel. Ansgar was one of the first Christian monks that came to Scandinavia as a missionary.



We also paid a visit to the Viking village where artists role play and show Viking handicrafts.



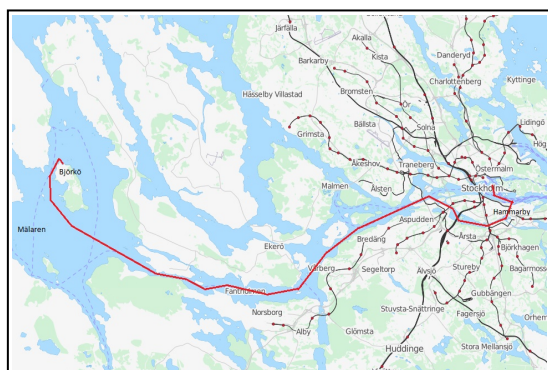
I also found this boat which is built using a technique which is probably quite similar to the boats built by Vikings a thousand years ago.



Boat chat in the harbour of Björkö.

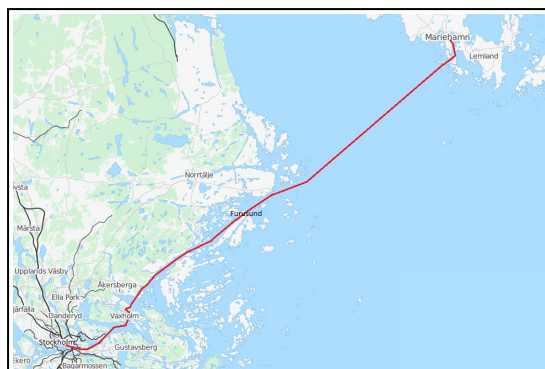


I love birds, they are usually very beautiful if you can get close enough. This Cormorant is no exception but it left an ugly soup of shit in our dinghy when it left.



We continued our trip to Stockholm. In Hammarby you leave lake Mälaren and enter the Baltic Sea through Hammarby lock. As you see, when the picture above was taken, the water level is the same on both sides of the lock. There is no tide in the Baltic but the water level can change up to a meter depending on winds and air pressure. Such changes are usually slow however and do not create strong currents.

Aland



Next stop was Mariehamn, the capital of Åland. First time in open sea for Bird of Passage. Everything went fine but without the rig she rolled like a motor boat. There are two harbours in Mariehamn, one on each side of the city. If you plan to continue north through the Åland islands, the east harbour is best located.



Left, Albanus, photo by Bruno Girin, © CC-BY-SA 2.0



Right, Linden, photo by Kosebamse, © CC-BY-SA 3.0

Åland is a small autonomous part of the republic of Finland. 6.700 islands of which only a few are inhabited. The total population is 28.000, of which 11.000 are in Mariehamn, the only city. For centuries, sailing has been an important part of peoples life. During the 19:th century, many farmers built their own freight ships that were used during the summer for trade business in the Baltic and North Sea. Today that era is remembered through a living

museum in the east harbour called *Sjökvarteret*. This museum includes a shipyard where the two ships above were built 1988 and 1992.



Pommern, photo by Mark A. Wilson, © Public Domain

By the end of the 19:th century the sailing ships had grown larger. Mariehamn attracted more and more ships owners. During 1920 to 1940 the worlds largest fleet of big sailing ships was owned by Gustav Eriksson in Mariehamn. One of his ships was Pommern, a real Windjammer that won the Grain Trade more than once and today is the worlds only ship from this time still in 100% original state. You can visit her in Mariehamns west harbour. The cargo hold is fantastic, it could carry almost 50.000 sacks of grain. You can learn more about it in [Ålands sjöfartsmuseum](#).



West harbour, photo by Pjt56, © CC-BY-SA 3.0

Shipping is still a big industry on Åland, 27% of the GDP 2013 according to Wikipedia. This is mainly due to a unique agreement with the European Union that permits Åland, an EU-member, to sell tax free on passenger ships coming from other EU-countries. This has created a big market for short holiday trips between Finland and Sweden and made it possible to build and maintain a fleet of very big passenger ships coming to the west harbour in Mariehamn. There is still also a relatively big fleet of freight ships travelling all over the world, so the tradition goes on...



Digital reconstruction of Bomarsund Fortress, © Esther Zimmer Lederberg Trust

Shortest route to our summer house on north Åland goes from the east harbour, through Lemströms Canal and into Lumparen, a well protected inland sea. From Lumparen you can continue north, pass Bomarsund and further north past Vårdö and then turn off west to Tengsödvik.

In 1832 Finland belonged to Russia. The Russians then started the construction of a big fortress in Bomarsund. Twenty years later, during the Krim war, 80 French and English warships attacked and destroyed the fortress. The ruins are now a popular tourist attraction.



From Bomarsund to Tengsödvik is about 20 NM and we have a nice mooring with a buoy right in front of our summer house. But what is this ? There was no rig on Bird of Passage when we left Sweden but on the left picture above...

Rolf and Kajsa from our boat club in Hjälmarén visited us and when they left the rig was gone of course ! It would have been nice with a rig right now, but it had to wait until next year.

Back to Örebro



We spent a week or so on the mooring in Tengsödavik on Aland and then started the trip back to Örebro in Hjälmarén to spend the winter in the harbour. On our way we made side trips to Kvarnboviken, Norrtälje, Södertälje and Mariefred.

The trip to Aland, and back, without a rig, had been very successful in that it had given us a lot of experience and that we had tested a lot of equipment. We now had a long list of things that needed attention. I didn't make a note of the total mileage this year but I did enter the route on our IPAD with Navionics charts and it measured about 900 NM.

Martin and I lived in the boat all winter, Tove and Gustav took care of Lobacken but spent their weekends in Bird of Passage. The ice in the harbour was thick this year, 30 centimeters or more and it was relatively cold for long periods, under minus 20 centigrade for weeks. This was a good test of the heating system. Our 3 KW heater kept the temperature inside on plus 20 most of the time but during the coldest period we put in two additional electric heaters, 750 Watt each.



The End of 2009

