



4. Aland 2018



by Johan Kjellander 2018



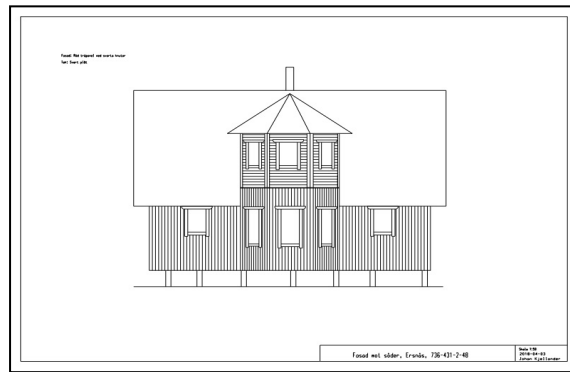
We left Bird of Passage in the Philippines by the end of March. This year it was still winter when we arrived to our home in Aland with minus 10 degrees Celsius (14 degrees Fahrenheit) during night time and around zero during the day. Not exactly what we expected but spring was on its way.



A good proof of spring approaching are the sea birds returning from their winter quarters south. For many years now, we have had a Swan pair breeding in our waters and this year we saw them as soon as there was a small patch of open water available.



The house where we live is originally an old red summer cottage with a brown veranda. Two years ago we tore down part of it and replaced with a new structure which includes a sleeping room and a library. This year we decided to tear down the veranda and build a new section shaped like a bay window two stories high, similar to an 8-sided tower.



The tower will house a dining room on the ground floor and a room for recreation on top. Another year or two and we will tear down what is left of the old summer house and replace with a final section including kitchen and living room. The drawing above shows what it will look like when everything is finished.



To make space for the new house section we took help of a 14 ton Volvo excavator. He uncovered the ground so I could cast the plinths needed as foundation for the new building.



Two of the old concrete plinths needed to be lengthened and I also needed to cast two completely new ones.



This was also a good opportunity to do a little more digging. One job was ditches for new power cables to our two little guest houses and another job was to restore our beach with new sand.



New sand along the beach,



With the plinths in place I started to raise the wooden skeleton for the new building.



Time passes quickly when you work hard. The weather was fantastic with no rain and summer temperatures week after week. Our bird houses were now both occupied. One with a pair of Great tits and the other with a pair of Flycatchers .



The grass was growing fast in the warm weather and soon needed a cut. Time to try my new 80 volt battery operated lawn mower for the first time. Turned out to be a fantastic machine.



First week in May we had visitors from Sweden. Our two sons, their friend Terese and our old very good friend Evaldas. Wonderful to see them all.



In July our good old friend Tommy arrived with his boat Lorette to the east harbour in Mariehamn, capitol of Åland. Our son Martin and his friend Andreas were also on board.



A few days later I replaced Martin and Andreas and sailed with Tommy back to his home port in lake Hjälmaren, Sweden. Lorette is a Finnish built 33 foot Nauticat motor sailer with a ketch rig. She sails quite well in my opinion for a boat of that kind.



You meet many interesting crafts on your way through the Stockholm archipelago. This one is a sister ship to the famous but unfortunate Costa Concordia that was run aground by its captain in Italy 2012. See: [Costa Cruises...](#)



...and this one is a replica of a 14th century sailing ship, see: [Blanka.](#)



We had good winds and made the trip from Aland to lake Hjälmaren in only two days. There we joined with our wives and spent a beautiful day in warm and sunny weather on Fåran Island. A fantastic undisturbed nature reserve with long sandy beaches. If the pines were replaced with coconut palms it would be very similar to an atoll in the Pacific.



Sailing culture is very much alive in Åland. Being an island in the centre of the Baltic, Åland has always attracted sailors to visit and also inspired the people on the island to build boats themselves. During the 19:th century many farmers built sailing ships that were used during the summer to trade goods with the countries around the Baltic. Today you can visit Sjökvarteret in Mariehamn to see modern replicas of these boats being built.



Sjökvarteret includes a traditional shipyard, a forge and a dock for visiting boats. One of the boats built here is Albanus, launched 1988 and built as a replica of an original Albanus from 1904. Every summer a 5 day event Ålands Sjödagar is celebrated which attracts thousands of people and many sailing ships to visit Sjökvarteret.



Another boat built in Sjökvarteret is Jehu, a replica of a 18:th century fishing vessel, launched 1996. Currently, a boat named Alanta is being built and a bigger project named Emelia is on its way.



My own construction project continued. In early October most of the job that I planned for this year was done. I have now spent three summers on the house and it's more or less about half finished.



When you meet old cruising friends you always have a lot to talk about. We had a very nice visit from crews that we learned to know in Las Palmas some years ago. Christer and Siv still have their boat (Crystal Magic) in Las Palmas but Pia and Ulf have sailed far south along the coast of South America and will soon be in the Pacific. Ben and Sässi returned with their boat (Colomba) from Las Palmas to Åland earlier this summer.



A summer with fantastic weather came to its end. The Roe deers that were born in May/June have grown quickly. There are many of them around here. We see them almost every day.



First week in October we joined the sailing ship Albanus on its trip to the annual fish market in Helsinki. In old times people from the islands came here to sell their catch of salted herring in wooden barrels but now the products are more varying and the herring is packed in plastic. We had several tons of fish and fruit products on deck when we left Sjökvarteret in Mariehamn.



We were 13 people on board and everybody participated in the jobs that needed to be done, inside or on deck.



Weather was cold but mostly fine with good winds and a lot of sailing. Albanus is a replica of a traditional Galeas with two masts and a total of eight sails. Main and mizzen are reefed horizontally using "gårdingar" that tie them to the mast.



Albanus has 20 beds, a big saloon and a nice and well equipped galley.



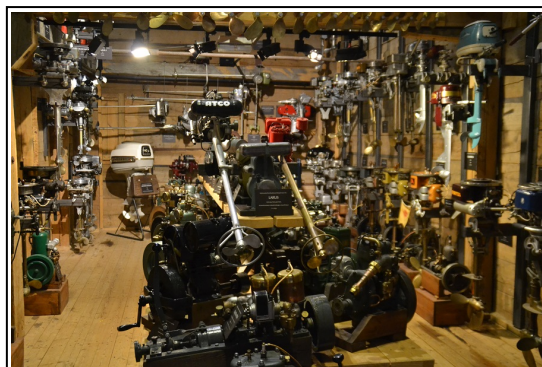
On the fourth day we approached Helsinki, the capitol of Finland. A berth was reserved for us in the old "Kolerahamnen". Several other sailing ships were already there and also many smaller fishing boats of modern design all waiting for the fish market to begin the next day.



The fish and the fruit that we had on deck belonged to "Bergmans Fisk" and "Peders Aplagård". Each had a stand on the quay next to Albanus.



Helsinki Herring Market, a tradition since 1743, see: [Helsinki Herring Fair](#)



We left Albanus next day and took the train to Åbo where we visited "Forum Marinum" a maritime museum. I was specially interested in having a look at Daphne, a sailing boat originally owned by sailer and writer Göran Schildt. Göran sailed the canals of Europe and explored the Mediterranean long before modern cruising industry and his books about his travels have inspired many of my generation to follow in his footsteps (which we also did during 1994-1998 when our children were small).



Summer had now come to an end. First weeks in November were cold and rainy so it was not difficult to pack our suitcases and prepare for the long air flight back to the Philippines. This year we had almost 30 kilograms of spare parts for Bird of Passage in our luggage. New main halyard, preventer lines, oil filters, Zinc anodes, blocks, propeller shaft bearing and sealing, AIS etc. etc. Many of these things are difficult to find in the south of the Philippines.

Early in the morning on November 17, we turned off water and electricity and locked the door to our house.



End of Aland 2018

