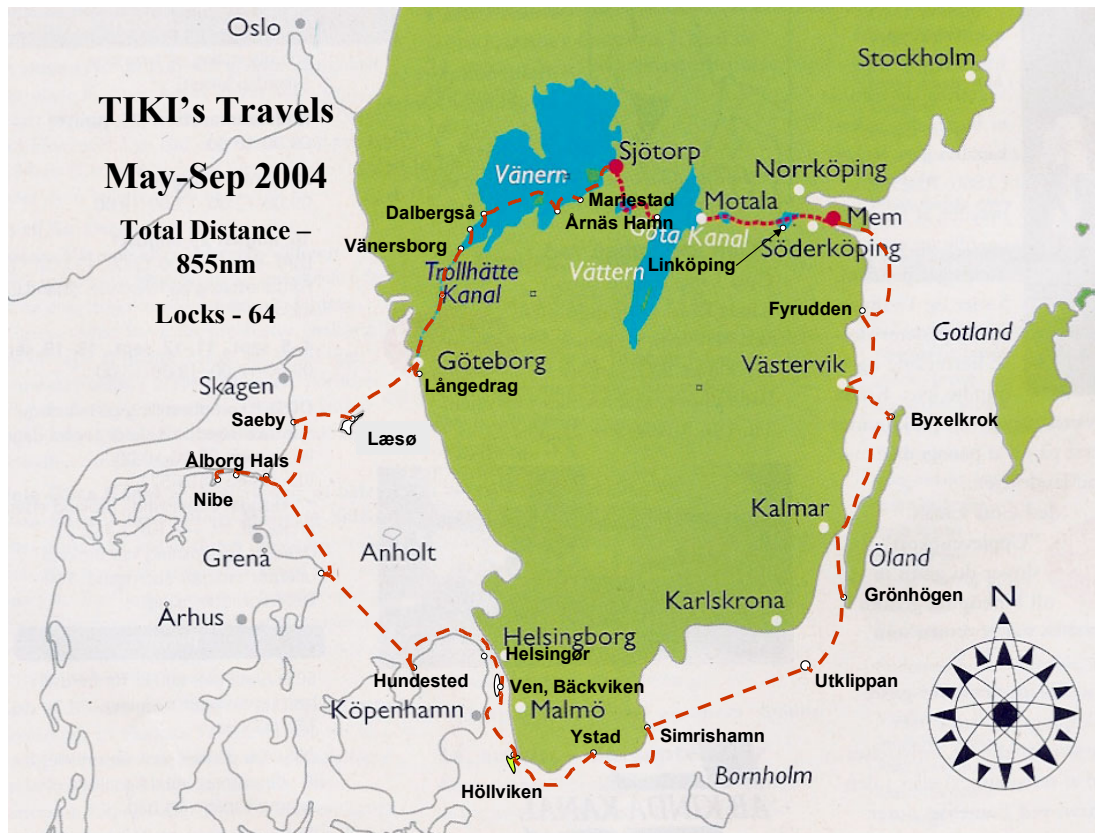


With TIKI in the Baltic



Good news, bad news

TIKI's 2003 season ended with good news and bad news. In June we'd managed to find a super harbour/marina at Nibe (pronounced 'Neba') near Ålborg on the Limfjord, which doesn't seem to have attracted the number of vessels it either deserves or was designed for. We used Nibe as a mooring and touring base for the remainder of the summer and were charged the same harbour dues as the locals (£107).

The first good news was that Knud (pronounced 'Canoe'), the harbour master, was able to provide an almost new stand left by a previous owner, so TIKI would be able to over-winter there. By the time I arrived for the lift-out, Knud had repainted it with bright orange red-lead paint making it the smartest stand in the boatyard. The second piece of good news was that my employers had agreed to allow me to change to a 33week part-year contract from my 60th birthday. This would allow me considerably more time for cruising from spring 2004.

What was the bad news? Well the day after a very smooth lift-out (£30), as I stood in the gathering dusk of a dull, damp, October afternoon, all packed-up and ready to leave, I noticed a thread out of place on the tip of TIKI's propeller shaft. As I went to straighten it with my thumbnail, it crumbled away, and I realised that the last half-inch of the shaft had developed the strength and consistency of a 'Crunchy' bar. I just had time to remove the split pin and locking nuts before rushing off to catch my bus.

Although the shaft had been replaced only five years previously, there appeared to be serious crevice corrosion running from the centring hole at the end of the shaft to the hole for the split pin. I suppose that, if I could have guaranteed remembering never to attempt a crash stop in reverse, I could have left it for a couple of years, but knowing that if something is going to go wrong it will do so at the most inconvenient moment, I realised a further visit would be required before the lift-in.

Fortunately, when I got home, I discovered my previous 30-year-old shaft still in my roof and as good as new apart from a bit of wear, so I was able to buy some one-inch stainless bar in Lincoln (£32) and have my old shaft copied locally. The machining took longer than anticipated and the estimated £30-40 had jumped to £160 by the time I arrived to collect it. After some haggling, we settled on £60 cash.

Fitting the new prop shaft

In mid March 2004, I arrived at Åhus Airport, clutching my new prop shaft and my trusty hub puller into what still seemed like the middle of the Danish winter. I wasn't worried that TIKI had no heating because the previous summer every supermarket had been crammed full of inexpensive electric fan and oil-filled heaters, and I was due to arrive at Nibe before they closed. This was a big mistake. The heaters had been replaced on display by summer items, and I was forced to book into a B&B until I could buy one from the local caravan centre at much greater cost. Then, by using this plus all the bedding on board, I was able to make myself comfortable. After considerable effort trying to remove the prop, it finally yielded with an almighty crack leaving my hub puller looking extremely sad. I was pleased that the two giant pipe wrenches I'd been carrying around unused for four years finally came into their own removing the cutlass bearing. After loosening the spider, I was surprised to find that there was insufficient room to work on the nut holding the spider flange to the inner end of the shaft. I didn't seem to remember having that problem five years before, but maybe the new stern gland I installed then was longer than the original. After a morning fiddling around without any progress I was ready to give up, but fortunately, in Scandinavia, there's a store called 'Biltema' which sells every tool you could ever imagine at unbelievably low prices. What's more, there's one at Ålborg. By 5pm, I'd purchased an extremely flat 17mm spanner, a similarly flat torque wrench and a suitably short socket, plus a supply of drills to make the new split pin hole. Next day, I was able to complete the stripping down and fit the new shaft. All went well until the drilling of the split pin hole. The stainless steel lived up to its reputation, and I ended up coming at it from two sides. If I'd left it at that, all would have been fine, but I decided, as a finishing touch, to put one final drill stroke all the way through. Three hours later in the dimming light and increasing cold, I managed to knock out the last bit of broken drill bit leaving a much abused looking split pin hole.

Launching

I returned to Denmark at the beginning of May for the lift-in, which was completely different from that at Winteringham. Most Danish harbours have a solid hard-standing running right up to the waters edge with at least 3m of water and little tide to worry about. This means they can manage with relatively small cranes, and on the morning of the lift-in, four arrived from a local family firm each towing a flat-bed trailer with hydraulic pads down each side to support the load. One crane positioned

itself on the jetty and another in the boatyard. The other two acted as tractors moving yachts on their flat-beds between jetty and yard. The crane drivers stood to one side and controlled the cranes using tiny joysticks on a radio control box hung from a leather strap around their necks. Presumably, they each used different frequencies. The rate of working was probably slower than at Winteringham, but as they weren't restricted to two or three hours lifting on the top of the tide at crack of sparrows, they had the luxury of being able to take their time.



After six months hibernation TIKI starts her journey to the sea.

To Sweden

After a couple of days fitting-out, I set off for the Kattegat pm on 5 May, and after a night stop at Ålborg to buy a chart for Sweden, I continued to Hals at the mouth of the Limfjord. At Ålborg, the same senior club member was sitting alone in the same seat in the clubhouse drinking what appeared to be the same glass of wine that he had been when I had met him a year previously. Last time, he very kindly loaned me his clubhouse key with strict instructions that, if I used the shower, I must dry the walls as well as the floor. I must have passed the test because he loaned me it again. At Hals, the forecast was poor, so I decided, if I was to visit Skagen to the north, this was best done by train. Alighting just short of Skagen, I walked to the delightful 14th century Church of St Laurence covered in sand for many years and now with just the tower visible. After taking lots of photographs, I continued along the beach towards Skagen and then on to the extreme tip of Jutland. During the train journey back, I met a retired Swedish naval officer who gave me lots of tips about the Göta River and Lake Vanern.

By Sunday 9th May I was getting restless and following my Humber Yawl Club colleague Ted Rea's philosophy that "It's never as bad when you get out there" I set off up the coast to Sæby. The wind soon dropped to a NNE3-4, and as I had 30 miles

to go, motor sailed most of the way north arriving at Saeby eight hours later. Identifying Saeby wasn't a problem as the large, whitewashed St Mariæ Kirke was visible in the sunshine for more than ten miles.

The distance from this part of Jutland to Sweden is only about 50miles, hence the name Kattegat (cat gap). What's more, there's a small Danish island Læsø about half way across with harbours appropriately called Vesterø in the west and Østerby in the east. After spending the next morning shopping and completing TIKI's 100 hour oil change, we (in the absence of crew I was talking to TIKI by now) slipped at 1300 and after half sailing and half motor-sailing in the N2-3 tied up in Østerby at 1815.



St Laurence's Church, Skagen. You can see where they got the idea for 'Lego' from.

We slipped next morning at 0730, and with a NE3 were forced to motor-sail most of the 35 miles to Göteborg (pronounced something like Gurta bora). It was a lovely sunny day without too many ships to dodge crossing the traffic lanes. The approaches to Göteborg were something to behold being made up, like a large proportion of the Swedish coast, of literally hundreds of rocky islands varying from a few yards up to a mile across. Most have less than 50% scraggy vegetation being mainly smooth, bare, grey rock. Many of these smooth rocks lie almost horizontal providing 'storage heated', if rather hard, sun-bathing spots for the locals. Göteborg is also home for a Marine base, and some of the islands are used for training. I saw several puffs of spotting charge on some of them, though whether these came from the naval shore batteries clearly visible above the base was uncertain. The water was alive with high-speed Marine craft ranging from rigid raiders to quite large landing craft, their camouflage blending wonderfully with the grey rock and dark green vegetation. We were also overtaken by a complete Field (or probably more accurate to say Fjord) Ambulance Unit comprising a dozen large high-speed landing craft camouflaged like the others but sporting white discs with red crosses.

Göteborg city is approached under a tall bridge spanning the river. The city extends both sides of the river with the city centre on the south bank. I was amazed to see the rockiness continuing. I saw the front of one hotel with five floors to the right and only three and a giant rock to the left. Construction sites in Göteborg are covered in a slip of slimy grey mud as a result of the Swedes boring straight through the rock. Large passenger ferries moor up to the south bank, and corporation water-taxis ply from one bank to the other. We first tried to moor at the Lilla Bommen marina right in the centre of town, but it was rather noisy and open to all comers from the shore, so after a quick visit to the shops, we slipped again and motored back down river to the Eriksberg marina on the north bank. This is situated in a disused giant dry-dock previously used to build ocean liners and is spanned by a massive 450 tonne travelling crane. All the shipyard buildings around have been converted into business and conference centres. The marina itself was full of brand-new moorings and water and electricity supplies, but it appeared to be more than half empty; there were no staff visible; and the only facility was a locked 'Portaloo'. We lay there undisturbed for two nights whilst I tried to contact the agents, because by now I was desperately looking for somewhere to leave TIKI while I returned home for three weeks work in the UK. I eventually found a telephone number and was told the marina was full. I found this more than once in Sweden. If a marina is administered from an office ashore, they are happy to claim a marina is full, even if half the berths are unoccupied. So long as someone has paid the annual rent on a berth, they are not interested in short stays by visitors. As I hadn't seen any staff during my whole visit, I was tempted to leave TIKI there unattended like 'Goldilocks' for the next three weeks. Thinking better of it however, we slipped on Thursday morning 13May back out into the estuary to find somewhere more suitable, and with staff to talk to. I eventually fetched up moored in the Royal Göteborg Sailing Club Marina at Långedrag about four miles down river. This is a huge marina which is also one of the homes of the Swedish equivalent of the National Sailing Centre, and it was alive with bright young people in designer gear happy to sail out engineless in what for TIKI and I was stay-in-bed weather. The mooring fees were rather expensive, but I got a reasonable deal for three weeks, and there was the added advantage of two watermen to keep an eye on TIKI.

Trollhätte Canal

I flew home on 14May and then back to Göteborg on 5Jun with my wife Jeannine. We spent Sunday sight-seeing in Göteborg including visiting the Göteborg Maritime Museum, which seems to comprise only full-size ships moored in the river including a destroyer and a submarine, all of which you are free to crawl around. Next day, we set off in a dull drizzle back upriver. After stopping in the city to buy a river chart and a chart of Lake Vanern, we entered the Göta River/Trollhätte Canal. The first few miles have factories on either bank, but then the river widens out into what can only be likened to the set from 'Rose Marie'. It's so beautiful, you run out of adjectives to describe it. It's deceiving though, because most of the way up, the steep sides and bottom are formed from the same smooth rock as the rest of the area, and the markers stick out into the channel on cantilevers 10-20m long hung from the steep sides or from dolphins. Couple this with a river flow of 1-2 knots in places, and you realise that, if you suddenly lost the engine, you could be trapped against a cantilever and pushed over very quickly. The fees to transit the Trollhätte Canal are quite expensive (£51), but they take very good care of you. The six locks are ship sized and

very tall, achieving an overall lift of 44m, with columns of bollards up the sides rather than lizards. However, the water enters through the bottom; the lock keepers take you up very gently; and we never had to share with ships, so the whole thing went very smoothly.



Which is the starter button?

The main set of four locks is at Trollhätte itself, which is again an area where you run out of superlatives to describe the scenery. At the top, we moored up for an ice-cream and to view the previous sets of locks hewn in 1844 and the ones before that cut in 1800. We stopped the first night half-way up the canal at Lilla Edet and the second at Vänersborg which marks the exit from the canal and the start of Lake Vänern. We saw very few yachts so early in the Swedish season and only one timber ship and a 'Death on the Nile' type river-cruiser which passed us while we were still berthed at Lilla Edet and another river-cruiser which overtook us further upriver without difficulty.

Lake Vänern

Although called a lake, Vänern, at 44m above sea level, is an inland sea, the third largest in Europe. With an area of 5648km², it is roughly the same size as Lincolnshire, and the most direct route between the Trollhätte and Göta canals is 64nm. The fact that it's no paddling pool is reflected by the fact that it's said to have accumulated more than 1000 wrecks over the years. After slipping from Vänersborg into a sunny, humid afternoon, we motored in a light south easterly and stopped for tea at the jetty and bathing area of Sikkhall about 10nm NE of Vänersborg. It was 9 June, but the only other vessels we saw were a pair of German yachts as we left Vänersborg. Sikkhall was deserted too, although two bathers did arrive on bicycles while we were there. The season starts very late in Sweden.



When I'm calling youuuu oo oo oo oo oo oo! The Göta River.

Slipping from Sikhall at 15.30, we continued up the coast to find the tiny inlet of Dalbergså. This took some finding, because it is just a slit in the rock lying back at 45° to the shoreline. After sailing past, we saw it better from the NE and eased our way in at about half a knot. Once beyond the rocky entrance, the land widened out into rolling countryside, and we were tied up by 19.00. Once more, the site was deserted apart from two or three caravans in the adjacent field.

Next morning, we slipped at 10.00 and inched our way through the entrance and back onto Vänern to complete the 35nm or so to the eastern side. TIKI was able to run nicely in a SW3-4 with a preventer on the main. Around the Kållandsö peninsular, the wind went up to 5, and TIKI scuttled along at 6kts on a broad reach. This was exhilarating but tiring and left little time for navigation, so once clear of the peninsular, we bore starboard onto 100° into its shelter and made for the easy harbour of Årnäs Hamn. We saw only one other vessel en-route, a fishing dinghy, and once again we were the only visitors. That evening we went for a walk and were rewarded by the sight of 'Bambi's' mum only a few yards away at the end of a forest track. Next day, there was barely enough wind to fill the sails, so we motored for three hours to the town of Mariestad, arriving in time for lunch. After visiting the shops, we slipped at 16.00 and arrived at Sjötorp (I never did get my tongue round that one), the western end of the Göta Canal, at 18.15. As the locks shut at 17.00, we spent the night in the lower basin. There is a canal museum at Sjötorp, but we wanted to get away to a good start next day, so we missed it.

The Göta Canal

The Göta Canal is 103 nm long and contains 58 locks. It comprises several navigable lakes joined by bits of canal. It was built between 1822 and 1832 to provide an alternative route between the east and west coasts of Sweden, because at the time,

Denmark occupied the lower tip of Sweden and charged the Swedes fees on all goods passing through Øresund, the sound between Denmark and modern Sweden. The canal never had massive commercial use, and today is used mainly by leisure craft and pleasure steamers. The opening season is very short from 3 May to 26 September. Between 3 May and 9 June and between 24 August and 26 September, you must give three days' notice, so they can send some-one to operate the locks. Between 10 June and 23 August, the canal is open daily from 09.00 to 18.00 and is staffed mainly by university students. These are the most helpful group of young people you could ever wish to meet. They are all extremely well-mannered, and all speak perfect English. Unfortunately, the passage is rather pricey. For a 6-9m vessel, the dues are £201 single and £276 return, but they do take good care of you. You can moor free at each and any of the canal company's 19 guest harbours for up to five days. All the facilities are free apart from some of the washing machines. The ablution blocks are spotlessly clean, and access is gained with a smart card. You are given two of these when you pay your canal dues. If you wanted to, you could take the entire season to complete your transit at no extra cost.



TIKI at Tåtorp the highest point on the Göta Canal (91.8m amsl)

Ascending the locks can be a bit stressful at first, because unlike the Trollhätte, the water is let in very quickly through paddles on the gates, and you need to keep your lines very tight to stop being thrown around. The best method is to have a bowline in each line and put one person ashore to drop them over the spikes or rings by the side of the lock. Run the stern-line vertically to a cleat in the cockpit with half a turn round it. The bow-line is taken through a turning block at the bow and back to the cockpit winch. All the skipper has to do is lean back holding both lines to take up the slack, taking care to keep the stern-line vertical. We had no trouble, but it seemed the

larger the crew, the bigger the struggle, with crew members ashore pulling against those on deck, and no half turns around cleats. No wonder the canal is known in Sweden as the 'Divorce Dyke'. They like you to stop your engine inside the locks to prevent fumes building up, and this means the crew member ashore is expected to man-haul the vessel between adjacent locks. The largest flight is at Berg where there are seven locks in the lower (Carl Johan) section and two more in the upper section. Fortunately, we were descending by then, which is much gentler.



A family fun-day on the 'Divorce Dyke' at Berg. Oh for a packet of soap powder.

By 11.00 Wednesday 15Jun we were clear of Berg and on Lake Roxen. We had only 30nm to go until the end of the Canal, and I was on the lookout for somewhere to moor, because on Saturday afternoon we had to return home for my next five-week stint working back in England. The canal company would let us moor for that long but at a commercial price, so we headed south across Lake Roxen to Linköping (Linchurping) to see what we could find there. We were fortunate to fall on our feet. We found a large, deserted, club-owned marina, less than half full, although the moorings board showed all moorings let. While we were deciding what to do, an ambulance arrived, and a paramedic got out and started to lovingly check the yacht nearest ours. We got talking, and he explained that many skippers have two moorings, one inland near where they live and another summer mooring at the coast. He himself was moving his yacht early on Saturday morning, and if we wished, we could leave TIKI on his mooring from 19June until the end of August for a nominal fee of 500SKR (£38). We readily agreed and were free to spend the last two days of Jeannine's holiday sight-seeing in Linköping and following the local forest trails. We found out that the 'airport bus' also passed through town, so we were doubly lucky. The only disadvantage was that each day started and finished with a 3km walk

through an industrial area from the moorings to town, because we weren't on a bus route, so we really could have done with bicycles. On Saturday morning, we took up our new mooring; finished packing; and carried our bags the obligatory 3km to the bus station for an uneventful journey back to Stanstead.

Hitting Sweden



Invaded by baby swallows at Mem

Free from work once more, I returned to Sweden on Friday 30 July, and arriving in Linköping about midnight, decided a Taxi was in order for the 3km to TIKI. After a couple of days provisioning and forest walking, I slipped on Monday 2 August to complete the last 30nm of canal spending Monday night at Norsholm, Tuesday night at Söderköping, and Wednesday night Mem, the exit to the canal. I was a bit worried about descending the last 15 locks alone, because the rules say you should have a crew member ashore to help the lock keeper. However, I needn't have worried. Once they knew I was alone, the students telephoned ahead, and one of them was always waiting to take my lines when I arrived at the next lock.

The east coast of Sweden is an archipelago comprising thousands of islands of all shapes and sizes. I awoke very early on Thursday, anxious to be off exploring some of them, and I was ready to slip about 06.00. However, I had a feeling about the still, misty morning, and sure enough, the visibility suddenly dropped to less than 100m. After an early morning walk and a leisurely breakfast, the mist burned-off sufficiently to allow me to slip at 09.15. In the meantime, TIKI's lines had been invaded by a flock of 50 or so swallows, mainly juveniles, who having got fed up with instrument flying, sat and watched me eat. As I headed down the fjord in light airs, I couldn't

believe how beautiful it was. For the next week or so it was very hot and calm. The temptation to strip down to swimming trunks and be cooled by TIKI's 4.5kt breeze took some resisting, and even being as careful as I could, I still suffered some sunburn.

After cruising through the islands for about five hours, I decided to try my luck mooring to one. From the chart, I chose an easy looking natural harbour set parallel to the rocky edge of a largish island, which is also visited by a small ferry a couple of times a day. It seemed deserted, and I eased in at about half a knot in over 3m of water with steep rock to port and flatter land to starboard. I suppose I should have gone for the steep side, but I chose the middle. As the entrance opened out, I realised there were lots of yachts moored, and I thought "easy peasy" and started to open the throttle slightly. Then there was the almightiest crash. I shot forward and TIKI lurched to starboard and rotated herself port into deeper water. As we went round, I saw rock only a few inches below the water on the starboard side. They must have heard the crash in Stockholm. Now when 3.5 tons of yacht hits several million tons of Sweden, the yacht is unlikely to come of best, and I was convinced I must have ripped her bottom out, so I tied on to the first yacht I came to large enough to bear TIKI's weight and tried to remember where I'd hidden my wallet and passport. After checking the bilges, keel bolts, engine, and chain plates, I could find nothing wrong, so started reluctantly to make frogman preparations. Being in the water rather than on top of it is not one of my favourite pastimes. While I was messing around poking my toe in and wondering if I would ever be able to get out again, the father of the chap whose yacht I'd tied on to dived into the water like a homesick walrus and reappeared a few minutes later to tell me he'd inspected TIKI's bottom, and all was well. I was so relieved; I gave him one of the emergency bottles of whisky I had laid-in for such an occurrence fifteen years ago but so far had never needed to use. At first, he refused, but his wife said if he wouldn't take it she would, and honour was satisfied. After tidying up, I crept out very carefully with my tail between my legs and made very cautious progress to the more sensible harbour of Fyrudden. Whilst on the way, I came across the first of only two British vessels I saw in the entire journey in the form of a couple cruising in a wayfarer dinghy. After overcoming our mutual surprise, we hove-to and nattered for several minutes. At Fyrudden I moored next to a Swedish couple who admitted that everyone in Sweden hits rock at least once in their career. The trick is to look casually in the other direction and pretend it wasn't you.

Utklippan

And so, I continued through the Archipelago in glorious weather day after day visiting Västervik, Byxelkrok on the island of Öland, Kalmar, and Grönhögen also on Öland. I wish now I'd taken longer over it, but as I was a long way even from Nibe, I was anxious to press on before the weather broke. I missed out Gotland for the same reason. By the time I got to Grönhögen, I was getting fed up with archipelagos, which can be quite demanding navigationally, so I set off 30nm for Utklippan, a tiny little rocky island off the southeast tip of Sweden. In bygone times, after much discussion, the Swedes built a lighthouse there, but they armed it with cannon in case any of their neighbours, or the British tried to pinch it. Then it was made into a harbour of refuge for fishermen with a dock with doors and two entrances blasted into the rock. Now it's only used by yachts. The blasting and the demise of the doors

means that the island is separated into three parts, so a pair of rowing boats is conveniently left for use by visitors. The only facilities are a small café near the lighthouse and a couple of earth-closets sporting traditional heart-shaped peepholes in their doors.



TIKI at Utklippan

Next morning 12 August, I slid out of bed at 04.30; quietly released TIKI's Lines and allowed her to drift silently to the centre of the harbour so as not to wake the neighbours before starting her engine and heading for Simrishamn 52nm to the WSW. At Simrishamn the weather broke, and I finished this stage of my tour sailing to Ystad on a dull, drizzly Friday 13th being very careful not to upset the gods.

Having never been away alone for so long before, I thought might get lonely, so I had planned a week's holiday back to UK from Malmö Airport just in case. Ystad being the closest port to the airport, and the weather being very windy, I negotiated a good deal with the marina, and spent a couple of days completing minor repairs and sight-seeing before flying home 17 Aug.

Ystad – Falsterbokanalen

I arrived back from UK in the early hours of 26 Aug, and as it turned windy, and I was tired, postponed sailing until 27th. I spent the day buying bits for lazy-jacks, which I'd finally decided I ought to install and trying out my new folding bike which I'd bought and flown out from the UK. For some reason, I also worked out and entered GPS waypoints for the whole journey to the Falsterbokanalen and had a sudden little pang of conscience about whether I'd changed the fuel filter this year, something I hate

doing even more than oil changes, because it invariably means bleeding the fuel system. Although there were lows about and poor weather in the North Sea, the 21.33 forecast for the Southern Baltic was S-SW 3-8ms, so at 06.00 next morning I slipped and was soon motoring westwards with a reefed main. Just after raising the working jib at 07.15 the engine stopped, but I was able to start it again immediately, and after letting it run until 07.30, put it down to a temporary blip; turned it off; and tacked westwards in a W4. By 08.45 the wind had died slightly and only slothfulness prevented me shaking the reef out. I was to be glad of this later. By about 10.00 I was out of the shelter of the Smygehamn Headland, and the wind backed to SSW and strengthened again. Progress was slow in the choppy seas, and at 11.20, I started the engine to motor-tack. At 12.10 the engine stopped and refused to start. The absence of classic Yanmar injector noise meant nothing short of a full bleed was going to help. Now, I've done one of these at anchor on the Humber, and that was bad enough. The thought of doing it single handed in what was rapidly becoming a force 5 to 6 onto a lee shore with the autopilot hunting away using up battery life was a nonstarter. I considered running back to Ystad, but the final entry would be very choppy if the wind was backing there too. The only solution was to continue tacking westwards hoping that the anticipated shelter from the Skanör Peninsular would allow me to reach into the Falsterbokanalen and find somewhere to tie alongside before the road bridge. So that's what I did. I got chances to run into Smygehamn, Gislövs läge, and Skåre as I went along the coast, but I had no detailed entrance charts, and if I made a mistake with the piloting, I'd be either racing into a small harbour full of expensive yachts or stuck on a lee shore. TIKI was creaming along nicely at over 6kts, but there was sufficient weather helm for me to start worrying about all the stories I'd read in 'Rattling Sabres' about stainless steel ribs slowly rusting away inside Sabre rudders. I considered reefing further, but I needed the sail height to get me through the troughs and keep me moving through the waves, so I just hung onto the tiller for four and a half hours and let TIKI give me a sailing lesson. Fortunately, it wasn't cold, and I had entered all the important places into my GPS the day before. The lead-in buoy to the Falsterbokanalen Channel did not become visible until I was almost upon it, but my Garmin 12 had taken me straight to it. From there the going got progressively easier in the shadow of the peninsular, even though there was shallower water on either side of the channel, and I had no trouble entering the outer harbour and dropping the main. It was then a simple matter to sail gently along sheltered canal under jib alone. I called the road bridge with the hope of being let straight through, but my VHF had ceased transmitting during in the trip, and I got no reply. I was tempted to sail right up to the bridge but saw a small jetty just short of it and got alongside that. It's a good job I did, because when I went to look around, I realised that the bridge was protected by a metal curtain lying two inches below the water surface. I might have hit Sweden twice, and not got away with it this time. I tied up at 16.50 after an 11-hour trip and noticed I had not had time to make a log entry since 12.10. After changing the fuel filter and bleeding the engine, I contacted the bridge keeper by mobile phone and passed through at 20.00.

After that, the sailing was all downhill, even though I was going north. The engine stopped once, but it was calm enough to bleed it at sea. I arrived back at Nibe on Sunday 5 Sep and arranged a private lift-out a few days later (£120); this worked out less expensive than flying out again in late October for the mass lift-out. I'd expected to see the keel about six inches shorter, but there was just the faintest scrape on the front tip.

I can thoroughly recommend sailing in Denmark and Sweden to anyone and have decided to leave TIKI out there for another year. With a roller reefing jib and lazy-jacks planned; one of the new VHF radios; and a retired wife, there should be no stopping us.

Dave Pike

TIKI