

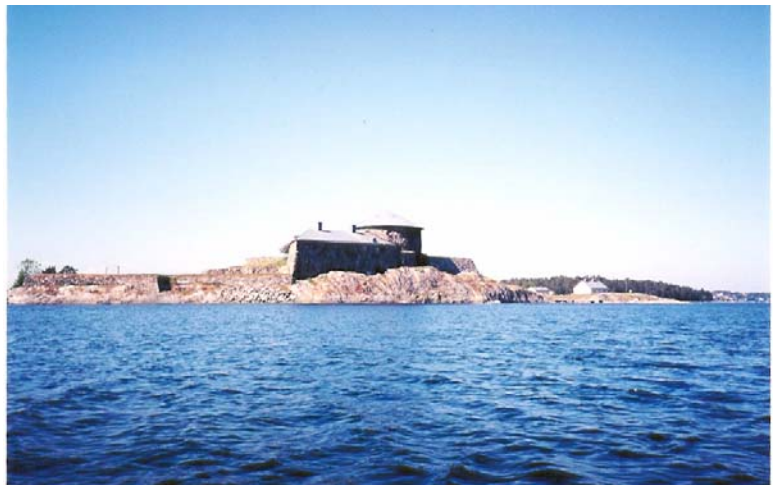
Swedish holiday in a Cornish Shrimper

16 May to 20 June, 2002.

Robin and Gillie Whittle (Bumble Chugger: 124)

Part 4: The Baltic

We awoke to sunshine and a pleasant light south easterly breeze and after an early breakfast set off down the same route that we had taken with Lucy and Ben two days before under the bridge at Björknäs. The channel turned to the left for two miles before leading into the narrow passage of Baggens Säkert. The banks of this were lined with lavish properties set in amongst the trees. After another mile this led into Baggens fjärden and we turned onto our new course heading south east. It was a pleasant sail with Ingarö on our port side. We passed a number of interesting sailing boats, all different from each other and all with peculiar hull shapes and sail rigs; some with very low bows and high sterns others with junk sails. It reminded us of the “Old Gaffer” rallies on the East Coast of England. By late morning we had reached the headland Vishamnsudde and altered course for Stora Vindåsen to the south. The wind had been heading us up to this point and it was the first real opportunity to hoist sail and make use of the light breeze. The course marked on the charts took us through a narrow channel between two islands and on southwest threading our way through wooded and rocky islands. We chose one, Edesön Island, to anchor off and have lunch. Our sketching pads came out for the first time and we both made rather dismal attempts to record our pleasant surroundings. Then off again winding our way through more islands, one of which was topped with a converted castle, Dolarö skans (now advertised as a restaurant). Soon after passing this we left the channel and headed for our next stop at Brunnviken at the south west corner of Ornö Island. We had to cut through a very narrow passage to get there and this led into some very peaceful inlets with one or two houses showing through the trees with their well looked after private jetties. Our chosen marina had one pontoon and we were the only visitors. We had sailed a total of 30 miles. We tied up quite close to the outer end and went to check out the washing facilities. There was a house that looked connected to the marina but we saw no one. The toilets

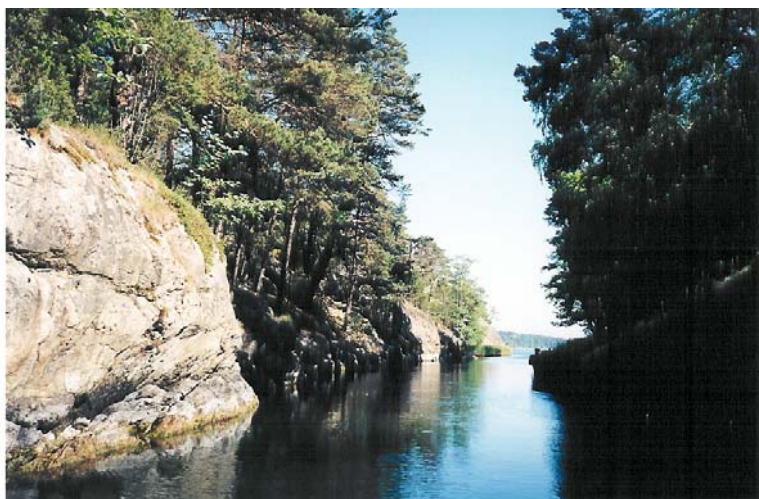


were open and there were some notices about the facilities. We returned to BC and settled down to cook our supper. We were quite surprised to be visited a little later by the harbour master requesting his fees. He explained that there was no post box but if we left any cards or letters outside his front door he would take them with him the next day when he would be driving to the local shops and would post them for us. We had a very comfortable night in this sheltered place and woke the next morning to more good weather.

Whilst eating our breakfast we watched a dog playing with children of a nearby house. We left written cards outside the harbour master's door and wondered if they would reach their destination, a completely unfounded worry as it turned out.

We set off and had a straight forward sail through Mysingen leaving Musköto to starboard arriving at Nynäshamn for lunch. After a quick foray into the town to stock up with stores we set off again to sail

through some of the most beautiful part of the trip so far. The channel wound its way between Järflotta Island and the main land. Much of the shores were nature reserves and we waited with baited breath to see what was round the next corner. Each one gave us fresh views of little creeks and pretty shores. We had just enough wind to carry us through it all at a gentle pace, eventually coming out into the Konabbs fjärden. We then sailed south with a touch of west until we arrived at Öja Island. The southern end of Öja is Landsort, which is the



southern most part of the coast covered by a travel book "Arlhoma to Landsort". We found a small marina at Skravleviken at the north-west corner of the island. We arrived at the same time as two other yachts, which was a little surprising considering how few others we had seen on the trip down the coast. There was only just room for us all along the small quay and our view was limited by the superstructure of our next door neighbour. A foray ashore confirmed our worst fears about washing facilities - there were none. We settled down for a quiet evening in the cabin.

The next day started with sunshine and a light south-easterly breeze. We left our rather cramped mooring at 8.30 and headed out into the Baltic. We had decided to sail on a direct course for Arkö Island. For the first five miles we were aided by the transit created by the lighthouses at Öja giving the exact bearing for our chosen course of 235°. As they disappeared over the horizon we were able to pick up the North Kränken lighthouse. This marked the main channel for large vessels making their way to Oxelösund. Over to port we could see the huge Gustaf Dalén lighthouse which had a visual range of 20 miles. By midday we were passing the Kopparnageln lighthouse and by 2 pm we had reached the rocks and islands marked by the Karthällan lighthouse. We had now rejoined the channel that we had taken on our way to Oxelösund. Seeing the scenery in reverse with the much improved weather made it difficult to recognise the route that we had come along over a week earlier but every now and then we looked back and recognised some of the features. During the afternoon the wind steadily increased from the south-east and as we bore round the south of Arkö Island up the Arkösund we freed off and gathered speed. We arrived at the entrance to our chosen Gästhavn at 4.30 in a flurry of spray. It had been a long days non-stop sailing and we were glad to arrive in a sheltered haven. We had covered 37 miles. The marina shared its washing facilities with a camping and caravan site. Although this was very large it was well laid out and did not impose on us. We took the opportunity of having long and hot showers, after which we went for a meal at the local camp café. As we were enjoying our coffee after some good food we were joined by some enthusiastic Swedes keen to try their English on us. One spent some time describing an island which he said we should

visit the next day on our way south. We returned to BC feeling much revived and unsuccessfully checked our charts for the island that he had been so enthusiastic about.

We awoke to an overcast sky. The clouds were high and it wasn't long before the sun broke through. It appeared to be the start of the summer season for many boat owners and we felt ourselves being part of a crowd for the first time since we had arrived in Sweden. We continued our trek southwards along the marked channel, which everyone else was also doing. It was a pleasant quiet sail threading our way through yet more islands. Gillie had been studying the charts when suddenly she exclaimed that she had found the island that we had been looking for the evening before. Its name was Harstena and surprisingly it was only about 4 miles off our route to starboard. At first Gillie was not too keen to leave our well marked route, but needed little persuading to agree to make the detour, knowing that otherwise we would later regret not making the effort. After a tricky bit of sailing trying to miss half exposed rocks we approached the entrance between two islands. We were surprised to find a little anchorage and a quay to which a pleasure steamer and a number of yachts were tied up. We found a gap and made fast, bow to the quay. We could see some pretty timber houses further along and decided to go for a walk and get a

better idea of the place. We had been told that it was a small well knit community that had built its own houses and settled in a traditional manner. Everyone joined in to help the community. For us it had great charm and we wandered through the hamlet along a dusty track admiring the open style of the houses. Harstena is quite a small island barely half a mile across and two miles long. We suddenly found ourselves on the far side looking out over the blue sea dotted with many more rocky islands. Walking further up the island we found a little jetty with a small café. We bought two ice creams and sat outside enjoying the rather ramshackle scenery. They had started to prepare for the summer season but it was quite clear that more time was needed. Signs were half painted and the rather dilapidated furniture was being checked over. We wandered back to BC along a different track and found a party of sightseers having a sit down meal at a café close to where we had moored up.



We agreed that it had been a pleasant interlude and set off, continuing through a small gap between the islands.

After some pleasant off-piste sailing we found our way back to the well marked route and so to our next stop for the night at Fyrudden. We had sailed about 24 miles. Fyrudden is a small but pleasant marina with a few shops along the quay side. We went for a short cycle ride but all the lanes we tried led into cul-de-sacs with rather opulent looking houses at the ends. On our return we called in at the

store and were amazed to see, in a corner, a 78 rpm gramophone complete with its wind up handle and Ted Heath record in place. The shop owner came over and played it for us saying that he had a large collection of 78 records. We were tempted to stay and hear a few but decided that supper's call was more urgent. The chandlery was very well equipped and we bought a new set of charts to cover the last part of our trip. When we arrived back at BC we noticed a huge shoal of fish, up to 8" in length, swimming quite close to the surface surrounding BC in very clear water.



The next day we awoke to more sunshine but the clouds could be seen gathering in the north-east. The wind was still light from the south-east and we set off under motor. Soon we found ourselves with a crowd of German yachts and decided to turn off the main route and work our way through some closely knit islands. This became a tricky navigation exercise requiring a constant look-out for submerged rocks. We tried to feel our way through a very narrow passage but, after touching the bottom twice, decided to retrace our steps and find another route. Eventually we found a way back to the channel and continued until lunchtime when again we veered off to find a quiet creek. This we did and dropped anchor in a sheltered spot.

After lunch, sketching books came out and our attempts were a definite improvement on the first occasion. It should have been a simple matter to find our way back to the marked channel but we got confused by the islands and rocks and for an hour became completely lost. In retrospect we should probably have checked our GPS but anyhow eventually we found a way through to the east and got back on track. There was still over fifteen miles to go to Loftahammar which was our chosen destination for the night so we kept on the 'straight and narrow' for the rest of the day.



We were able to sail the last six miles with a following light breeze which was very welcome. Loftahammar is at the edge of a small lake connected to the sea by a very narrow channel. It was very pleasant finding our way through this in the late evening and then seeing the Gästhamn open up just in front of us. We found a spare berth and settled down for the evening. We had covered 28 miles.

It was now Monday 10 June; a pleasant sunny morning again. We set off on our cycles in search of the shops. We cycled round the residential area without ever finding a town centre and finished up at a small bakery opposite a supermarket quite close to a church. Although the rolls and bread looked fine they turned out to be a bit spicy. In fact, we never found bread in Sweden that we really liked. It was either too spicy or too sweet. They did not appear to have the concept of freshly baked bread each day. We returned to BC and set off for Blankaholm rather later than usual at 1030 am. We were feeling quite brave and left the marked route to explore our own way through the islands. It was pleasant being on our own again and we found a sheltered cove on the west side of South Malmö. After lunch the sketch books came out and the results seemed a little more successful than our previous efforts. The sun was shining brightly and on the spur of the moment I decided it was hot enough for a swim. Before giving myself the chance to change my mind I had stripped and dived in.

It was really quite warm especially close to the surface. After a few splashes I persuaded Gillie to follow suit. Before joining me she hung our small plastic ladder over the side to make things easier for us to get back on board. We both felt very refreshed as we dried ourselves in the cockpit and wondered why we hadn't taken the plunge earlier.



The journey took us south east leaving Västervik to starboard on the other side of North Landet a long strip of land which was in line with our route. There was a narrow canal through this providing a direct route to Västervik, but we decided to continue as there were still twenty miles to Blankaholm. We followed the route which took us into a narrow passage through two small islands, Grönö and Spärö, then on past Öeknö and Veknö. Blankaholm was a little off our main route which meant that we would have to retrace our steps the next day. There was a tricky part about four miles from our destination where we were sailing directly into the sun. It was quite impossible to pick out any of the buoys ahead until we were right on top of them. We had to avoid some submerged rocks at the entrance to the final channel and it made us extremely nervous. However our course was spot on and we found the channel without mishap.

Blankaholm turned out to be a small marina. Posts were placed fifteen meters from the shore intended for stern ropes. We lassoed one successfully and continued forward until the bow was nearly touching the pontoon. It is quite a tricky operation with a small boat like ours but we were getting more adept at it. After tying up we strolled around the marina to check the facilities.



Everything was closed and there did not appear to be any loos. This was a bit of a blow and not as described in the book. We felt cheated and had to make do with the bushes.

The next day, Tuesday 11 June, we awoke to clouds and more wind. The barometer had dropped and we knew we were in for worse to come. A warm front was coming through shortly to be followed a cold front. We set off hoping that we would get to our next stop, Figeholm, before the weather had become really bad. We had a head wind for the first ten miles and motored until we reached the Vinökråkan lighthouse. This marked a turn to the south and allowed us to set sail. The wind had increased to force 6 and the fine fetch was made more uncomfortable in the nasty chop. We reached Kråkelund and our heading altered to the south west. Our speed increased and we had to concentrate hard to keep to the narrow channel which wound its way through the dangerous rocks only some of which we could see. We were heartily relieved when we turned west into the bay where we would find Figeholm. The gästhamn was in a sheltered spot and as we came up to the pontoon a man appeared on his bicycle. He jumped off and helped us to moor and wished us "Welkommen" as he rode off again. We relaxed after what seemed a long trek. In fact it was only 2 pm and we settled down to a game of scrabble as the rain pattered on the cabin top. By the time we had finished the rain had stopped and the sun appeared. We set off to explore and find somewhere to replenish our supplies. It had a pleasant

village atmosphere with some of the houses built close to the waters edge. Soon after returning to BC another visiting yachtsman came over to chat. He was one of many Germans sailing in the Baltic and emphasised that he enjoyed the sailing most in the area we had just come from. He said that the further south we sailed the more uninteresting we would find the coast and did not recommend sailing to Åhus, as the last westerly leg was in open sea and was invariably pretty rough.



The next morning we had a council of war to decide whether we went ahead with the original plan to try to get to Malmö or do something different. We ended up deciding to go a couple of days further south and then cut across to Öland island which sounded very interesting from the write up in the guide book. We would spend a day or two cycling round the island before returning to the mainland to get the boat out of the water.

By the time we set off the clouds were beginning to gather and another stretch of sailing across the sea became more unpleasant with the wind steadily rising to force 6/7. We threaded our way between the rocks just off St Kättelsö and Fittjö Islands and then turned eastwards towards Oskarshamn on to a fast reach. We found a sheltered spot in the lee of Tillingeö Island and anchored for lunch. The sun came out and it got quite hot. We watched a 15" long water snake swimming by the boat and did some sketching. As we prepared to leave black clouds were looming up again. It started pouring with rain, and as soon as we got away from the lee of our island we were hit by a very fierce squall. Oskarshamn was not far away, so we decided to head in there for shelter. When we arrived after a struggle through the heavy seas the wind appeared to have moderated a little, so we sailed on to Påskallavik as originally planned. There was a very nasty long haul of motor sailing into the wind with a steep chop coming straight at us, but things improved as we bore round the headland at Köksh. We then sailed in amongst the islands again. These seemed much friendlier than those of the day before - they were large and had trees growing on them, and once we were sheltered from the waves it was quite pleasant. We went through a sort of garden area, which was very populated with summer houses, and they had pretty gardens running down to the water, and boats moored.

There were still some open stretches of water to cross, so it was a relief to stand on dry land again at Påskallavik Gästhamn, watched over by a huge man, 10 foot tall dressed in red with a top hat, standing on an island a mile offshore. It turned into another beautiful evening as the wind dropped and the skies cleared. Some boys came and swam and dived off the concrete jetty near us. There were a couple of other boats along the quay. The Dutch crew of one came over and chatted. They had sailed over to England quite often, and knew our home waters of the River Deben well.



The next day started very wet and we spent the morning writing postcards and studying the charts. After lunch we succeeded for the first time in getting a weather forecast in English on Channel 26 - something we'd been trying to do spasmodically since we started sailing 3 weeks ago. It came through

loud and clear - gale warnings for the north and central Baltic. There was no indication of when the gale would arrive and after some deliberation I rang a Stockholm number that we found in a guide book. The lady answering was very helpful and said that a crossing to Öland was not likely to be a problem with winds of force 3-4 for the next 3 hours.

So rather than being holed up at Påskallavik in the coming storm, we decided to set sail for Öland where we wanted to spend the next day cycling anyway. It absolutely tipped it down for the first hour while we were working our way out through the islands. We passed near a wood factory at Mönsterås bruk which smelt quite horrible, but which looked very dramatic in the stormy skies. The wind was reasonable for the first part of our sea crossing, but as the rain stopped, the wind dropped from force 3 to 2 and we had to rely on the motor. The GPS helped us make a landfall on Sandvik, situated on the north west coast of Öland.



Four hours later we were glad to get into the harbour as there was an uncomfortable swell building on the sea. We went to a suitable pontoon where two other bigger yachts were tied up, to be greeted with the news that we all had to move over to the other side of the harbour where the fishing boats were moored under the harbour wall, which would give us more shelter from the gale moving in from the west. The harbour master was very busy trying to find places for us all in a very limited space. We put plenty of fenders out and tied up well in our new spot against a hefty, white fishing boat in company with several other boats, including Dutch, German and Finnish. All this time the wind was steadily rising. I was quite shocked on looking at the barometer: it had dropped over ten points - I don't think I would have been so keen to make the crossing knowing what was coming. A bit later, a large two masted yacht, 'Asdikaa' from Hamburg, arrived and manoeuvred into place just behind us.

We visited the fish shop on the quay to pay our harbour dues, and bought some peppered smoked mackerel for our supper, which turned out to be delicious. Then we retreated to the cabin for the evening. The wind was up to about force 6 by the time we went to bed. We both went to sleep quite quickly, but were woken up sometime during the night with the gale in full force. The wind was up to force 8 and was howling through the rigging and the boat was moving around very violently. It was not a good harbour to be in with bad weather from the west: the sea just surged in through the narrow entrance.



In the morning we all emerged rather bleary-eyed after very disturbed nights. The wind was still whistling around and the spray was being sent high over the sea wall. There was no sign of the gale abating, so it was a good day for us to set off on our cycles. We were a bit worried leaving BC, but we retied the mooring ropes and asked the harbour master to keep an eye on her.

We set off northwards through meadowland, well treed with ash and oak and silver birch, all looking lush and green. The road side and fields were full of colourful wild flowers. We passed an ancient wooden windmill which looked a little out of place amongst the dense bushes and trees all around. Many areas reminded us very much of Ireland - small fields with shaggy grass and reeds, dotted with rocks and bordered with crumbling stone walls, and milk churns left at the end of farm tracks. The houses belied the impression - very Swedish looking in reddish



brown or yellow painted wood with white trim. There were prosperous looking farms, very tidy and generally with beautifully kept up large, brick red barns with black doors and shuttered windows. Mostly dairy farms with the cattle looking in top condition. There were quite a lot of horses around, and they also looked in beautiful shape. We diverted off the road at Källa to the old church a couple of miles away. From the outside this appeared to be a very dull five storey grey block of a building. The guide book said it was empty so we expected to find a ruin, but it was lovely inside, very plain and simple with an altar with a cross and some pots of flowers around. There were five wooden models of the church, showing how it had started as a simple wooden stave building, and then a tower had been added, and finally the roof had been raised to the height of the tower. It had been used as a place of refuge for women and children during insurrections, and openings had been made near the top so that missiles could be thrown. It was still used for services in the summer, and weddings and concerts were held there.



We retraced our steps, passing a couple very heavily laden on their tandem bicycle, with panniers over their wheels and pulling a trolley behind piled high. We passed many windmills, no longer in use but most of them in good repair. It was nice to see a different view of the country - on land rather than from the water. We could appreciate the different wooden houses, some grand, some simple buildings, and the different types of garden, generally filled with plenty of colour; poppies, pansies and petunias, and lilac and weigela bushes covered in flowers. The must-have status symbol seemed to be a sundial, of the spherical kind, usually supported by a leaping figure, and many gardens had model windmills, and flagpoles bearing the Swedish flag.

After a couple of hours we turned off on a grassy track for our lunch, and then continued north westwards along a good road, though we managed to keep off the main roads. It was all very flat which made for easier cycling. We did another small detour when we were near the coast again at Byrums Raukar. We went down to the shore where the sea was looking very wild and the wind whipping up the white caps and the breakers crashing on the sandy beach. Rising from the sand was a spectacular area of limestone pillars eroded to strange shapes. Then back on our cycles we continued along a road through the woods towards Böda. It was here that we got lost: we turned off along a track which we thought would lead us east and back south, but after a while we realised that we were being taken north again. We turned where we could and soon found ourselves on the main road, heading south. We decided to turn east off this and try to meet up with the original cycle track that we must have missed. We ended up completely lost doing a very large circle. We made a couple of sorties down tracks that ended up in farms; where in one we were greeted by a gorgeous black shaggy dog, very friendly, and two rather surprised little boys. Then we were back in the forests on rough, stony tracks that seemed to go on mile after mile - by this time we were extremely saddle sore! At one point a very large hare lolloped across our path - it looked like a small deer! It was with great relief that we turned onto the road that we recognised where we'd had lunch. It was still a long slog back to Sandvik and it was a welcome sight to see its large, fine windmill at the end of a long stretch of the road - we'd done 38 miles. There was a small aeroplane parked by the mill which did flights over the island - it would have been a much easier way to see the sights!

Back on the quay we found a pottery shop, and we called in and chatted to Tina Skiöld who was busy making pots. She was using black Swedish clay for her stoneware, which went brown when fired. There were some very nice bowls and pots and mugs arrayed round the room, and we bought one. It was a great relief to get back on board BC and rest our weary limbs! The wind had moderated a certain amount, but the motion on board was still not very pleasant. I retied the mooring lines, so that we were attached only to the fishing boat and not the quay as well. It helped a bit but we still had another uncomfortable night being jerked around.

Saturday morning arrived with the wind dropping to a more reasonable strength, and we were glad to get away soon after breakfast. It had not been a pleasant stay in the harbour, though we'd enjoyed our bicycle ride: very surprisingly neither of us was stiff after our epic ride!

We sailed southwards along Öland to Borgholm - the coastline changing from rather friable looking low rock cliffs and stony shore, to fields and trees sloping down to the water's edge where cows were grazing. The ruins of a huge, stone fortified castle on a hill above Borgholm led us towards the town and into a large, nearly empty, marina. They have to cater for a huge influx of tourists, 55,000 each year, but only in July and August. We tied up next to two identical large cutters from Holland that looked like charter boats, and while we were having our lunch, a young man with two little boys, 4 and 5, came and chatted with us. He was very pleasant and the children well behaved: they'd been looking for minnows. The children came aboard and were very excited peering into the cabin. His wife was expecting their third child any day, and he'd taken the children out to give her a rest. Ten minutes later they wandered off to look at other sights.

Ashore it was a different, very festive, atmosphere with a large rally of Corvettes car in progress - 60 to 100 of them parading along the waterfront and making a lot of noise and fumes. We went in search of the tourist information office to book our train tickets for the journey back to Trollhättan to pick up the car and trailer. We stopped off at a small supermarket, where I watched the England v. Denmark match on a TV in the shop's entrance, while Gillie did the shopping.



The afternoon's sail back to the mainland was very pleasant, with the wind actually blowing in a co-operative direction. We zipped across at 6 knots, with a good view of the Ölandsbron Bridge. Once back among the islands, we wound our way through to Timmernabben. As we approached the channel marks, we saw a very crowded yacht sailing out. Her mainsheet appeared to become separated from the sail as they passed us. The crew seemed to be in total disarray, possibly not expecting the wind to be so strong. They turned up to wind and lowered their sails and then motored into the lee of an island for a picnic. It then began to pour with rain! We tied up to a small quay outside the gästhamn, much to the consternation of a pair of white wagtails who had a nest under the pontoon. There was a lot of chirping and chattering and aggressive strutting towards us, but they got back to their feeding duties after a while, though one of them remained very nervous. We could hear noisy cheepings each time a load of insects and grubs was delivered!

At 6 o'clock Timmernabben's harbour master turned up on his cycle for the harbour dues. A very nice man, who made us feel most welcome. This helped us to the decision to stay for another day before collecting the car and trailer. We would take the boat out here.

We settled down for our usual early night, to be disturbed by the sound of boats arriving at about 10.30. There was a lot of noise and talking, and on peering out we could see there were two motor boats; one had flashing lights and radar, and as it pulled out and away from the smaller boat, we saw it was a large and impressive lifeboat. The other was a small day boat. This had been tied up next to us and contained an older man and two youths. They settled themselves down without further ado and we went to sleep speculating on what had happened.

In the morning, they emerged looking fairly dishevelled, the older one with a blanket round his waist held up with a belt. We called out offers of tea or coffee and breakfast, and the older one replied he couldn't come over - he didn't have any trousers on: he was being Mr. Gandhi! They didn't want any food - they had plenty, but one of the young ones came for a cup of coffee. He said they had been collecting the boat from Kalmar and were on their way to Västervik when they hit



a submerged rock which damaged their propeller. They had then drifted for a couple of hours before calling up the lifeboat which had taken them in tow. I offered them help and tools, but they were obviously not seamen and did not have the first idea about boats. They decided to wait until the harbour master came down at 9ish. I mentioned that they were moored right next to the white wagtails' nest and suggested they move their boat forward a bit, which they did.

We all potted about on our boats doing cleaning jobs, and they turned everything out of their boat and put most of it on the jetty. One of the boys, who spoke good English, seemed quite active, the other one wandered around smoking. We were waiting to see the harbour master, as we wanted to check that it was alright for us to stay another two nights, and have the slipway opened for us on Tuesday morning. We were going to spend the day at Timmernabben, but we weren't sure if we'd explore by boat or bicycle, as the wind had been steadily getting up and had become quite strong. We couldn't believe our neighbours' next move. They'd managed to get their engine going, though it didn't sound too good: all their possessions and food remained on the jetty: they cast off and headed out into open water! Very soon there was a spluttering from the engine and it stopped. By then they were well in the grip of the wind blowing off the shore, and the two pieces of wood they produced and started paddling with, made no impression. There was a little wave to us for help. So off we set after them and affected our first rescue in "Bumble Chugger"! And we landed a rather sheepish boatload back at the jetty.

We'd tied up again, and had just about decided that the wind was too strong for a pleasant sail through the islands and we'd go for a bicycle ride, when a cap came floating past. The wind had whipped it off Mr. Gandhi's head as he sat in his boat. I retrieved it and returned it along the jetty. We noticed later that the motor boat had no name but its registration mark was REK 39 - very appropriate. As we were unpacking our bikes, a large white Mercedes arrived with wife? Mum?, and she packed them and all their goods into it. They'd arranged for someone to pick up the boat with a trailer on Monday afternoon. A few miles into our ride, there was a hoot behind us, and they passed us with much waiving. We had a pleasant trip into Mönsterås, which was a nice town, slightly reminiscent of Woodbridge, and we wandered down to the harbour where an old two-masted wooden boat was being done up.

Back to the boat for lunch, and as the wind hadn't slackened as expected, I did some sketching, and Gillie did a painting of a very nice red and white fishing boat tied up near us. Another diversion during the afternoon was the launch of a quite large wooden boat. The launch had started as we left in the morning; when we got back it was only half in the water and water was pouring into it. I kept popping back and forth with updates on progress. The man was pumping furiously with a hand pump, and wife was sent off to get an electric pump. By late afternoon, both pumps were still working hard to stem the tide.



At 6 o'clock the harbour master, Peter Johansson, came collecting dues, and we invited him aboard for a glass of Islay malt whisky. Apparently a very good choice - a favourite of his. He was a very interesting, pleasant man, and he stayed for an hour or so, while his wife was out for a run. He and his wife, a Norwegian, had only moved to Timmernabben two years ago, after a life of travelling the world with his job, and having taken early retirement at 57. They were in Buenos Aires at the time and had to decide where to retire to - their criteria was that it had to be within 100 kms of an international airport and with a view of the sea. They got a short list of 22 houses on the Internet, decided on Timmernabben, and got it by auction bidding from Buenos Aires. He worked for a large Swedish

pump-making firm as after-sales Mr. Fixit. He recounted some amusing anecdotes: a 5-day trip to China - to change a fuse; a summons to Wales - the pump started and operated for a short time, and then no more water came through. He investigated the pump, but knew that as it had worked there wasn't anything wrong with it. After a couple of days head-scratching, he had the area of water drained, and found a plank of wood had been left behind by the contractor, and when the water was being sucked up, the wood went with it and blocked the inlet hole. One red-faced contractor! He still did a certain amount of work for his old firm, but he was enjoying being harbour master, and was involved with the local sailing club.

He took us up to the sailing club after our drink, and opened it up for us so that we could see round their little museum. There were various relics of old boats and seamanship, and pictures of the many big ships that had been built locally because of the plentiful supply of oaks. We'd been saying to Peter that in all our four weeks we hadn't seen another English boat, and when we signed the visitors' book, someone from England had been there earlier in the day! When Peter left us, we continued through the village to the local pizza restaurant. It was looking definitely very out of season, with not much happening, but we had a good pizza and a glass of wine. As we walked back down to the boat, we realised it had turned into a really nice evening, and the wind had eased up at last, so we took BC for a last little sail in the evening sun up to one of the nearby islands, and back to moor in the main marina, where Peter thought she'd be safer left on Monday. I'm sure the wagtails appreciated having peace and quiet on their pontoon.



The remaining part of this holiday included a day's journey by coach and train back to Trollhätten with our cycles. From there we cycled to Åkerssjø where we found both car and trailer safe and sound. We drove to Timmernabben arriving back at 9 pm. The following morning Peter came to unlock the gate to the slipway and we hauled BC out on to her trailer and packed her up ready for the long return journey. This took us across the new Öresund Bridge and into Copenhagen where we stopped to have a wander round and an evening meal before finding somewhere to park for the night. Two days later we had joined the Shrimper Fleet in Zealand for a quite different sort of holiday!

