Wayfarer International Rally 2019

Kragenaes, Denmark

The Danish island of Lolland played host to this year's International Rally. Fifteen UKWA members and Ralph Roberts (WIC) joined participants from Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, USA and Canada. Kragenaes is the perfect base and is set in a wonderful sailing area of sheltered shallow seas with numerous islands. Here, the events of the week are re-told...



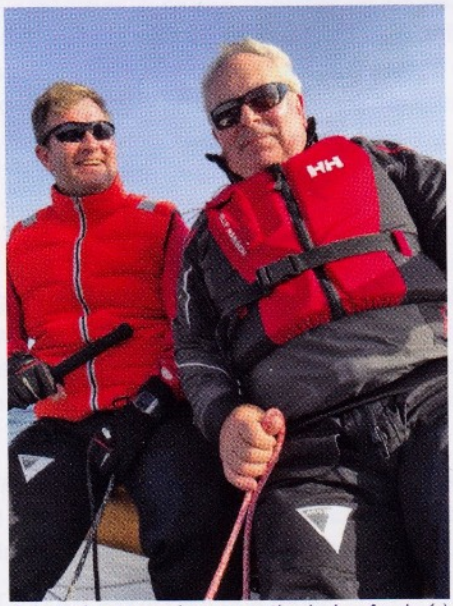
The orchard island of Fejo, lunch in Dybvighav, cake under the pear trees, top right

Monday

The International Rally in Kragenaes Denmark was my first experience of a Wayfarer cruising rally. Having only started sailing earlier this year, my experience of sailing consisted of maybe a dozen or so hours on the Norfolk Broads. This was going to be a pretty exciting experience!

The first day of sailing started with the skippers' meeting. The events of the day were discussed and the plan for the day was a sail across to the island of Fejo where we would stop for lunch and have a chance to explore. The weather forecast was for strong winds making the sea quite rough; never having sailed on the sea before I felt a little trepidation, but also quite excited.

I was sailing with my Dad Ansis in his Wayfarer, Popple. We were teamed up with Gunnar, a Danish sailor. We set sail with Gunnar at the helm. Immediately the sea was quite choppy and waves came crashing over the bow. I was glad I was well dressed for the occasion; for clothing, I'd just copied what my dad did! We were paired up with another Wayfarer, our "buddy boat". We met them outside the harbour and set off together on the 1½ hour journey to the island of Fejo.



Ari getting experience on the helm, Ansis (r)

Needless to say it took a few minutes to get used to the conditions out at sea. First of all I clung on for dear life as we crashed through the waves getting covered in spray. Once I became accustomed to it, it was really good fun. It was certainly different to my previous sailing experiences. In the strong winds, after what seemed like no time at all we were in sight of the island. On arrival we moored up just outside the harbour of Dybvig and were joined by the other Wayfarers.



The harbour was a small place with an old wooden building to one side where two men were working on wooden boats. To the other side was a small café-Pizzeria which had opened especially for us to have lunch. We sat on benches outside in the sunshine but out of the wind and helped ourselves to cold drinks from inside the cafe. The owner was a really friendly man who set to work making pizzas of all different toppings, bringing them out one or two at a time for people to come and help themselves. These were delicious, and he continued to bring them out until everyone could eat no more.

After lunch the group took a stroll out of the harbour along a small road to a village with a restored windmill. The mill





contains a museum, and the kind ladies running the museum had opened it up especially for us. They had made coffee and a special Danish cake layered with cream and berries. The cake was delicious and so light, a perfect accompaniment to the coffee.

Afterwards the group walked back to the harbour and set off for Kragenaes. White horses on the waves indicated that it was still quite lively beyond the shelter of the island, and sailing back in close formation with the other boats was thrilling! A couple of boats opted to wait until the wind eased which happened rather later than they anticipated. A combination of phones with flat batteries and working phones without signal prevented communication of their plan - and caused some anxiety for their wellbeing. In the end all that was lost was their 'after sailing beer'.

From the very start of the rally I was made to feel welcome by all the international Wayfarer community. We had a week of exploring the beautiful Danish coastline and small islands and evenings of socialising with fantastic food, drinking and singing from the Wayfarer song book. The rally was a great experience and I look forward to the next Wayfarer adventure.

Ari Rozkalns
W8823

Left; Landing on Fejo. Monica is reducing plastics in the sea - by drinking cans.

Right; Drinks 'on the rocks' on Lilleo Island

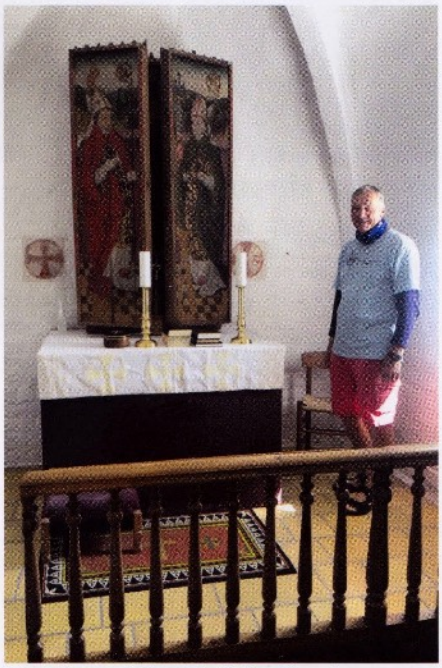
Tuesday

Tuesday dawned bright and sunny exactly as forecast, with a brisk south westerly that took us all the way to the island of Lilleo. It was a case of the blind leading the blind with regard to our exact destination and we arrived so quickly that we sailed straight past the designated landing spot and went right round the headland into the bay of Vejleeanke. Realising our mistake, we turned back, only to find that most of the fleet had followed us. We found a lovely quiet sandy beach and settled down with our picnic. The sun was still shining and the lovely clear waters of the Baltic sea looked quite inviting for a swim. I counted six of us in the water at one time, some stayed in longer than others!

Whilst we were swimming some of the other helms and crew walked across the causeway to the island of Vasko to visit the church. Poul There was also a cafe where you could get a free cup of coffee if you collected a bucketful of rubbish. I wonder if they've ever paid out on this sparsely populated and immaculately kept area? In fact, during the whole of the rally I never saw any litter. Everywhere looked immaculate, lovely houses with natural looking gardens, many of which had trees bearing rosy red apples.

All too soon it was time to leave the beautiful beach and set off back to Kragenaes. We timed our arrival perfectly - I don't think! - just as Kraganaes Sailing Club members were leaving the very tight harbour entrance for the start of their weekly race series. We thought it prudent to wait until they were all out of the way before we went in and were quickly home again, enjoying the evening sunshine. Then it was over to the sailing club for a very welcome beer. The international Wayfarer musicians were in full swing and soon had their audience participating in a Danish folk dance or two. Another delightful day on the Danish Rally. Thank you to our hosts who ran this 25th International Wayfarer Rally.

Chris Brown
W9282



The altar paintings in Asko Church





Locations to linger, seen above on Lilleo

Wednesday

After two days of sparkling sailing, the middle day of the week was for rest and culture. We were escorted to explore a nearby art installation, the Dodekalitten, which is a landmark on the north Lolland coast. This modern henge of standing stones celebrates the legendary people, the Lolers, who came to the area 5,000 or more years ago when the 'waters rose'; easy to imagine in this area of shallow seas. They erected 12 stone monoliths that were reputed to regularly sing together. The name Dodekalitten is a blend of Greek for 12 (think dodecagon) and Danish for 'stones on a hill'. The multi-ton granite blocks brought over from Sweden have faces carved into them. Especially composed electronic music plays through powerful speakers set into rocks creating an entrancing atmosphere and an earthy vibe, as if the stones are indeed singing. The work shows the foundations of democratic society, with its origins in consultation, where community is experienced in song, and where awareness of the past is expressed as respect for the ancestors - much like the Wayfaring community.





Beside the henge is a bronze age burial mound and chamber into which we crawled to admire the skill of ancient Lollers in building with huge blocks of stone. Climbing the mound's external spiralling snail-like path a vista of the island and its surrounding sea opens up.

After lunch there was campervan and tent sweeping, laundry duties and poking around some of the often seen garage sales. Then we assembled in a car convoy for a trip to Lolland's main town of Maribo. Built on the harbourside site of a convent, Maribo Cathedral is shaped like it is built of Lego, appropriately for Denmark. The Chairman of Kragenaes Sailing Club guided us around the historic and architectural treasures of the town before Uncle Willy of the Danish contingent generously treated everyone to tea and cakes. Uncle Willy who doesn't speak a word of English, and Kay who doesn't speak a word of Danish, nevertheless had several enjoyable conversations during the week.

It was not a day of rest for our hosts, as by evening they had whipped up gallons of batter and vats of chilli for a pancake feast, which was followed by sweet pancake desserts. They were professionals at making the thin galette-like pancakes and folding in the scrumptious fillings.

While digesting we learned about the Battles of Copenhagen when the British Navy attacked the Dano-Norwegian fleet and bombarded Copenhagen to 'dissuade' the Danes from joining Napolean's French/Russian alliance and to assure access to North Sea and Baltic shipping routes. Entente cordiale was restored with beer and a harmonious sing-a-long, in Dodekalitten spirit.

Merrin
W8545

Thursday

The day dawned bright and clear - the repeated forecast that "The sun will shine tomorrow" had come true again. There was a lively south-westerly blowing, force 3 or 4, a few white horses, and we were going down wind to Femo. The forecast was for the wind to moderate in the afternoon for the return journey upwind - what could possibly go wrong?

We set off with most of the fleet having one reef. Those that didn't get their over-trousers on before leaving the warmth and shelter of the harbour got caught out by the white horses and had wet bums to put under the trousers! Nevertheless, with the sun shining brightly and going down wind, a bit of damp down below was nothing to worry about. We had a cracking sail and as we were going down wind we didn't need full plate or rudder, which was fortunate as the waters are very shallow. There is a channel over 10 metres deep, but we were crossing that at right angles, to sail in water rarely charted at



Pancake production line, the Danes do food as well as they sail

more than 5 metres, and under one metre closer to the islands.

The original plan was to go to the sandy beach north west of Femo harbour, but since that was now a dead-on lee shore, the plan was changed to sail into the harbour for more shelter. The harbour isn't very big, and we would need to raft-up three or four deep. This was less of a problem than getting up from the Wayfarers to the jetty, which was a long way above us, being designed for fishing boats. There was some interesting (to watch ...) close-quarters tacking undertaken to get boats into the right position for mooring, and some equally interesting manoeuvring to get the less mobile sailors up onto the jetty; something like the western roll I remember from school high-jump (but considerably more elegant).

Our target on the island was a restaurant a couple of kilometres inland, that served a Danish speciality called Falling (or Shooting) Star, consisting of white fish, smoked salmon, shrimps and salad on a bed of bread. One of the many thoughtful ideas of Poul and the organising crew (as well as targeting the restaurant) was to lay on a mini-bus to take the less mobile sailors to the restaurant. Others cadged a lift or simply walked through the lovely countryside in the sun to the restaurant; no hardship at all. The restaurant had been forewarned, of course, and out came the food.



Rafting up in the harbour on Femo

The restaurant had a pitch and putt course, and despite the allegedly non-competitive nature of the Wayfarer cruising community (!), a round of mini-golf followed lunch, no doubt with winners (and therefore losers ...).

The afternoon was spent on the beach by the harbour, where a couple of crews had defied the waves in the morning and rolled their boats up onto the sand. Some intrepid souls went for swims of various lengths, from three strokes just to say they had done it, to an extended game of ring-a-ring-a-rosie to the Wayfarer song.

After a couple of re-schedules it was decided about 4:30 that the time was right to head back, and because the forecast was for the wind to veer to be more westerly, it was decided to sail along the north coast of Fejo (that lies between Femo and Kragenaes) in order to have a more favourable angle to the wind when heading down the channel to Kragenaes.

Because the waters are so shallow it was recommended that we follow a lead boat with local knowledge to get round the north western corner of Fejo without incident. Unfortunately (as is often the way) the weather hadn't been told about the sailing plan nor the forecast it was supposed to be following, and the wind started to fade. As it did so, the fleet got more and more spread out, so that from the back it was no longer possible to tell who was the lead boat. It was still a clear blue sky and a reasonable (if reduced) wind, so no cause for panic, even if it is a bit disconcerting when a couple of miles off shore to hit a rock ...

When yacht sailing and preparing for a night sail, the period around a setting sun is a time for contemplating the beauty of nature and a change of regime to the night mode. In a Wayfarer dinghy it doesn't have quite the same resonance if you're trying to get home for the end-of-sail free beer that marked every day in the Rally. It was a beautiful sunset, but the wind had reduced to a few patches of cats' paws. Only two boats had outboards, but the wind had been so abundant the rest of the week that perhaps it was not so surprising.

Those with power helped the paddlers in, expressing the mutual support that is such a feature of the Wayfarer community in general and the cruising rallies in particular. Eventually we all got in, with all hands helping those who took their boats out every night (a few boats found empty berths in the Kragenaes marina and stayed afloat all week).

A long day, with vigorous sailing in the morning, gentle not to say artful sailing in the late afternoon separated by an unusual and intriguing lunch and an afternoon on the beach - what's not to like?

Richard Seabrook
W9301



They went to sea by the light of the moon



A huge thank you to our very excellent Danish hosts for all their planning and preparation for this Rally, especially Poul, Jesper and Jannik. Poul Ammentorp above, helming W239.

Right: The lee shore on Lindholm



Jeremy's boat has a human depth sounder. Danish pastries on Lindholm

Kragenaes SC chairman Jorgen had obtained permission for us to land on the Count of Lolland's small private island, Lindholm. Whilst we prepared to depart mysterious cardboard boxes were observed being stowed carefully in Poul's boat. With fair winds for a broad reach Monica, Ari & Ansis had fun flying their spinnaker, weaving through the fleet at the total expense of 'course made good'. We anchored on a lee shore, some using rollers to pull boats onto the beach. We practised our anchoring skills and I ended up wet to the waist towing Rita to the end of the fleet so there was no chance of her swinging onto other boats.

When we joined the others the contents of the boxes had been revealed - the most exquisite Danish pastries made for us very early that morning by our campsite hosts. Then peeping through the windows of the Count's summer residence we fantasised about living there and worked off the calories consumed by walking round the island, searching for fossils on the beach before a leisurely picnic lunch with some people swimming in the clear sea.

We were pleased and relieved that our anchoring held and then thrilled by our orderly get-away from the lee shore. It was a blissful close-hauled sail back to Kragenaes with both of us wishing that the week wasn't coming to its end. Some boats went the long way round, circumnavigating Lolland.

The final evening meal was due to be a hog roast but a diary mix up by the caterers required some quick thinking..... the kitchen became a slaughterhouse whilst the whole pig was butchered and became a BBQ with amazing salads and side dishes and dessert of delicious cake baked by Irene and Sue who sacrificed a beautiful day's sailing. The evening ended with music and speeches of grateful thanks to Poul and our wonderful hosts for a truly memorable week.

Kay Marriott
W8545

