As in 2021 this year's long trip was again scheduled for the Baltic but because of Brexit and the uncertainty surrounding VAT, the programme was totally revised and was based in UK waters, specifically the west coast of Scotland.

But unfortunately, most weeks were not sold, which was very frustrating as we had a team to take Freyja up the East coast and down the Caledonian canal to Oban. We also had a volunteer crew to bring her back to Ipswich at the end of the cruise. We used Kerrera Island off Oban as our base and the management team there were very accommodating. Unfortunately, we didn't do very well financially in our charters, as John (the treasurer) will explain later.

The Long Trip this year certainly had its moments of interest, initially the Caledonian Canal closed for maintenance work, which clashed with the first crew's passage and handover.

So instead of Oban, the second crew took Freyja over at Corpach Basin, below the Neptune Steps at the end of the Caledonian Canal after its long east coast transit. Exiting the last lock they headed down Loch Linnhe and the gateway to the Western Isles. The rest of Freyja's time in the Western Isles was comparatively trouble free but she spent some time on a berth on Kerrera as we had no takers for a number of weeks.

At the end of the summer Jeff Herschel and his family took Freyja from Oban and holidayed on the Caledonian Canal finishing at Inverness.

In the Master Plan, John Miller and his crew were scheduled to take Freyja back to Ipswich over a two week period visiting lesser know ports down the East Coast.

They set out with the intention of returning Freyja to Ipswich, and given half-decent weather, John said he was sure they would have achieved that goal. Their passage plan included a two day loss in case of bad weather plus another in case of emergency. Unfortunately, they were hit with a succession of strong winds from northeast to southeast, and because of this some of the smaller harbours were untenable. Reeds advises against entry in some of them in strong winds from east and northeast, and I hate to think what the insurers would say if they had ignored that advice and Freyja was damaged as a result. John said that if you asked any of his crew about the passage around Rattray Head in just a southeast force 4, they would tell you that conditions were very, very uncomfortable. This coupled with some engine

problems meant that their time span was limited, and they could only get to Sunderland.

So, another crew was assembled with the idea of completing the final leg from Sunderland - but 20 miles offshore and in 50 metres of water they hit an unlit object while crossing the Minerva Gas Field area. At the time they had two people on watch and the boat was motoring at around Skts. There were no unlit objects on the chart - or lit ones. They had a following sea and tide in their favour. The watch noted that speed dropped to zero and the location was not changing. Hence, they realised that they were being held.

As you would expect all crew members were wearing lifejackets and harnesses as they were night sailing. They made a number of attempts to reverse. This failed. They attempted to raise the coastguard but no response. They avoided May Day as it was felt they needed assistance not saving. Freyja was checked for leaks and found none. As no response to channel 16 or 67 they tried "All Stations" and after a few minutes agreed to operate the distress button on the VHF. When the RNLI boat arrived, they tied a harness to the stern of the boat and pulled Freyja backwards. They were not sure when they came free as power on the helm was heavy possible due to reverse manoeuvre. They asked the RNLI to be released and found the wheel worked and they could steer.

The rest is history - although we did lose a further charter.

**But next year will be better!**