

ECYD Yacht Secretary Report for 2024

At the 2023 AGM, the members settled on the Long Trip taking in the Baltic again. There is so much to see there and so many ports within so many islands that it is easy to see why the Baltic is a favoured target area for sailing.

It was intended that the Long Trip would be centred on Malmo which gave a lot of areas in every direction for which to explore.

However, the programme for the Baltic was seriously disrupted with the resignation of the Yacht Husband soon after the New Year. As a result, the boat wasn't ready on time, the various short courses around Easter were abandoned and the boat didn't become available until early May.

The problems regularly encountered after choosing an area to sail to and around are getting a crew together to take the boat across the North Sea or up the East Coast to Scotland and to return. Getting to and from France or the Channel Islands is comparatively easy.

In recent years we have been blessed with two Skippers who use the experience for training their crews, and so it was this year – Ipswich to Malmo and eventually return in September was agreed. However, as the boat was late in being available a good number of regular Skippers had chosen other periods for their summer sailing in other boats and this meant that without crews Freyja would be left moored in some foreign port with high mooring charges.

As we had so few Baltic charters booked, this was uneconomic with the possibility of long periods sitting in Baltic Marinas, particularly as Ipswich was a zero cost to us.

In fact, although the summer wasn't a great success, it wasn't a complete failure either for in May Freyja did set off for the Baltic, starting with the run across the North Sea from Lowestoft to Den Helder, Heligoland, and the Kiel Canal to Rendsburg. A couple of follow-on crews spent time exploring the Danish Islands and the north-western coast of Germany.

With the possibility of Freyja sitting unused in a foreign harbour it was decided to shorten the Baltic cruise and bring her back to the UK early.

So, homeward bound saw Freyja back through the Kiel Canal, the Frisian Islands to a handover at Enkhuisen, then home from IJmuiden, to Breskens and the overnight run to Ipswich.

Once home other crews explored the local waters with Harwich, Bradwell and the Walton Backwaters being favourites.

Early August saw a 10-day charter back across the North Sea to IJmuiden, Amsterdam, Lemmer, Den Helder and home via Lowestoft, and followed soon after with Freyja returning to St Katherine's in the Pool of London.

The 2024 season ended with some more East Coast sailing to Lowestoft, Titchmarsh and Bradwell, including a short cruise up the River Deben to Woodbridge, crossing the very tricky Knoll Bar at the entrance to the river.

On reflection it has been a fairly successful season, though there were quite a few charter slots unfilled.

Brian Barnes

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