

# Raid Finland 2003 by Hans Manschot

Translation of a website report from [www.drascombe.nl](http://www.drascombe.nl) by Csaba Hanyi.

Some years ago I got a subscription to Watercraft as an anniversary gift. Every two months when a new copy is dropped in the mailbox it is a celebration. So was also in November of last year. My attention fell on the description of Raid Finland 2002 and the notice for the Raid in 2003. This time the sail regatta for open (traditional) small boats would be sailed in the Baltic Sea, in the Archipelago near the coast of Turku. After some Internet investigative work about this splendid sail area it appeared to be perfect for my restricted experience with my wooden Lugger "Anna." This was enthusiastically confirmed by the organizer Mike Hanyi. That enthusiasm was not related primarily to me but to the fact that my Anna would be an "excellent fit."

An excursion of 100 sea miles in seven days under sail and oar, that sounds great. My daughter Maartje, who just finished a sailing refresher class, found it also a splendid idea. Only the expectancy on long rowing parts seemed as a deterrent. We had gained experience with rowing at earlier trips, which did not make the expectancy rosier.

Quickly a compromise had been found. We take along our "quiet power" and for this reason register in the cruising class. In that class it would be permitted to use the engine when becalmed on longer routes. Truly, winning a trophy that way would be a trick. After some mail correspondence with the organization we were accepted and as NED1 registered. Afterwards the added figure appeared too optimistic because we were the only Dutch boat. Fourteen teams, divided among nine nationalities, have eventually registered for this Raid.

## Wednesday morning, 23 July.

I - with Anna in tow - have left the Achterhoek, the rural eastern part of Holland, with destination Stockholm. The two relatively new bridges in Denmark offer the possibility of driving without interruption comfortably to Sweden. That proved to be true. Thursday afternoon I stood with Anna on the quay Stadsgården, near the center of Stockholm waiting for the ferry to Turku. The crossing was splendid. Stockholm also has a wonderful archipelago where the ferry was passing while the sun was setting. After a quiet night we got a preview of the sail area which was waiting for us at the Finnish coast.

Friday morning at nine o'clock I stood at the door of the Aristo safety training center, the start place of the Raid. It was too early to meet everybody, therefore I decided to put my Lugger in the water. Several teams had arrived already, so that meeting with crew and familiarizing with the other boats followed rapidly. Anna was the only Drascombe present and that also would remain that way.



**Waiting for the Ferry in Stockholm**

The organization carried out a safety inspection by means of a checklist earlier transmitted. The absence of a fire extinguisher on board produced some discussion, because it stands in the regulation that, if an engine is present, there must be a fire extinguisher on board. Since I have a electric motor, therefore without fuel, I found this regulation somewhat exaggerated. Eventually my proposal has been accepted, that if my electric outboard (which sits under water) will burn, the plug will be pulled and whole thing stays in the water.



**The Launching of a Rescue Boat**

At noon I picked up Maartje at the airport, (she is working generation) and returned hastily to experience the launching of the safety boat. However, only as a witness, because it seems to me something like that should be experienced only if there is a real need. Earlier experiences offer no additional help. There were plenty of volunteers anyway for this dive.

At eight o'clock briefing in the training center. It proved to be a preview of the perfect organization. Charts were distributed and projected on a large screen in Powerpoint and explained. Photographs had been taken of the stopping spots and warnings issued for rocks, also for under water nets.

**Saturday.**

We were apprehensive about what stood before us, since, based on the presentation of the previous evening it appeared that our sailing experience did not stand out in comparison with those of many narrators. We were started according to the usual procedure. Well positioned! We were the first over the starting line and all others chased us like a rabbit. What a beginning! Anna in leading position. But the pleasure was of short duration. Manfred came flying by in his Woge - a prewar wooden race boat - he shot by as a javelin, followed by Kleiner Kerl - a Sjekte - under full rig. Soon we were forced to examine a lot of the beauties von behind.



**Kleine Kerl (little boy)**

The 8.5 mile morning sail finished on the beach of the island Nagu. Arriving with the wind behind us, with the centerboard raised, sailing only with the jib (pay attention to the swimmers!), we forget to raise the rudder, so that we got bogged down elegantly on the rudder under applause of the earlier arrived. Fortunately only in sand.



**Lunch Stop on the Beach of Nagu**

There was a delicious lunch served on the beach, attended to by a local restaurant. A beautiful beginning at splendidly sunny weather. The cook, who spoke fluently English (he turned out to be Irish), immediately dampened our euphoria concerning this splendid spot with: Sir, I hate the long winters here.



**On Our Way to Korpoo**

The afternoon stage demanded many tacks and our target was the bay of Toras Viken. We slept in a nice hotel, whereas approximately half of the company chose to camp. The excellent supper was provided by an organic farmer from the neighborhood, who hauled all his stuff with a small boat to this remote spot and with his girlfriend came to cook. They also served a delicious breakfast the next morning.

At the usual evaluation boat talk that night the Danes thought that Anna was at a disadvantage between the many trees of the islands because of its relatively low sail plan. Putting up the topsail would make a difference of more than one knot in speed, sometimes more. With this beautiful excuse we slept peacefully after a straining day.

### Sunday, Jul 27.

We started at 8 o'clock for a rainy excursion to Korpo. As we arrived the sun came out and we moored at a port restaurant. There was happy time, music, holiday feelings with a lot of Finnish sailors. After lunch we left for Houtskar. We had to navigate intensively between the many islands, they all seem to look alike. Since we doubted our position, we turned to the GPS and found that we went too far toward a rocky area. Quickly we turned back.

On Houtskar you find yourself a century back. Wooden houses, no traffic, and to reinforce our feeling for the Swedish/Finnish history a repertoire of 1000 year old Viking songs was sung that evening by three women. The people 1000 years ago found these undoubtedly melodious songs uplifting. We also visited the boat museum and the boat motor museum. We found that on the islands of the Archipelago more Swedish is spoken. A remainder of the long years of Swedish predominance in Finland.



**The Viking Singers (Tsakku)**

### Monday.

Early out of the feathers. Today continuous passage of 18 miles to Lappo. We have a stiff southern breeze. A local expert came to explain the situation. He warned us that the wind can create high waves due to a funnel effect in the channel. We put the reef in, prepared anchor, sails packed, wear life jackets, and take a lunch bag. Healthy food: tomatoes, raw peas, paprika slices, kiwis, bananas etc.. No chance to mess up the belly! The three escort high-speed motorboats would remain close to the group. Fortunately and unexpectedly the sea provided a relaxed crossing with no funnel effects and we removed the reef.



**The Carriage to Our Quarters**

### Tuesday.

There was little wind and we had a lot of tacking. A down day! Maartje wanted to be near her daughter Nele and I closer to the populated world. There was a lot of the same nature, with no letup. Eventually we got a tow to our lunch spot. There the only country-woman on the island had made fish soup for us. We appreciated that, very nice and after entering compliments in her guest book we left for Jumo.

Lappo is a mini republic (25000 inhabitants) with its own laws and parliament. The anchor spot was a well protected small beach. We were transported on a flat trailer behind a tractor to our sleeping quarters.

Francois Lelievre, the owner of the yard which built the cute boat La Seil, invited Maartje and me for an evening sail on his boat, while part of the group went to the sauna. Very easy handling boat with an only one sail, light and fast. In short, extremely well suited for this Raid , because even rowing remains more of an entertainment than effort. Maartje was very enthusiastic. Especially because he knew much about the Netherlands and our history. A real "Neerlandofiel" and a charming man, this Francois.



### **We are Sailing Again**

At the small picturesque port of Jumo nearly the entire population of the island (about 50 people) showed up to welcome us. It seemed the highlight of the year. The notice that Raid Finland will call here was placarded everywhere. While we dined sociably, beside a lot of other matters, there was of course also boat talk. Richard, an English man with Bunny, a genuine Victorian canoe yawl, must reef quickly because of her limited stability. With son Mike he had considered that day the solution: Mobile ballast. Take sheep on board, sheep have great fear of water and crawl always to the high side!

#### **Wednesday, 30 July.**

It was sunny splendid morning, but there was unfortunately rowing on the program! A crossing of about 5 miles with head wind and disturbed water. Both the participants of the racing and the cruising class had to compete in the rowing race, because the principal sponsor, an oar manufacturer, would be present. It was a severe excursion, our body temperature rose to the boiling point, and the mood on board decreased to the freezing point! We came in last, behind sculling Manfred, mostly interested in the finish line!

Mike, the organizer, came with the request that I invite the sponsor, with girlfriend and dog on board Anna for a relaxed sailing afternoon. They agreed. The dog had never been on a sail boat, therefore we just waited how that will work out, and the girlfriend confided in me that she had suffered twenty years ago a severe sail excursion and resolved never to touch a sail boat again. Boat and captain had obviously given her a reassuring feeling, she came on board. After twenty years!

I turned on the "quiet power" and we cruised away. Later we rolled out the jib and put the engine on standby. It became an unbelievable idyllic trip. With a nice breeze we cruised around and the dog nested himself in the front for the afternoon nap. The girlfriend enjoyed the sail and told me that she was beside being a teacher, also a part-time actress. She had previously acted in Warsaw in the Finnish epos Kalevalla. And she spontaneously started reciting from that in English. Splendid saga with savage developments concerning love, hate, and death. The sponsor also had a splendid afternoon and this possibly leads to more financial continuity for future Raids.

#### **Thursday**

A sail day with the usual two stages. There were some superb boats sailing in this Raid. I want pick out a couple here: Mike Hanyi with his Coquina II - a wooden two master with two gaff rigged sails, - designed by Nathaniel Herreshoff in 1912. The boat has no tiller but two lines for steering. A beauty, and now for sale because of the growing family.

Wouter van Roost, Belgian, with Griffioen, ninety years old Friesche schouw. Nicely restored, but no fast boat. He had to be towed regularly to arrive in time for the meals.

Kim Holm, Finn, had a grandfather who could not win any races with his boats. He decided at long last to design one himself but unfortunately died during construction and the boat was never finished. Two years ago Kim discovered the drawings and thus Olivia was built. Real, very fast sailer, however impossible to row! He became the winner in the cruising class.

I have much respect for Seppo (with that first name of course a Finn) who has built in his free time in six years a Haven 12 ½. Also a Herreshoff design, with great lines and fast.

A simple escort boat was manned by Frederick, a radiologist, who has built a Viking ship. With that ship he has sailed around Europe and by means of the Russian waters returned to Finland. Later he has written a book about that, which became a best-seller in Finland.



**Olivia, Winner of the Cruising Class**

### **Friday**

The last day brought us to Naantali. The eventual finish. The fast boys started later so that we would finish as close as possible to each other. It appeared later that this had been planned to offer the Finnish President, who was in Naantali in her summer home, an interesting show. It has obviously succeeded, because as reported at the winners awards, she had enjoyed it and wished us much luck in our further life. Nice touch!



**The Winners (Stephan Rudolf & Angelika Runge)**

The eventual winners were Stephan and Angelika in their beautiful and fast pointed Kleiner Kerl. A very fast sail boat with relatively even faster rowers. Average rowing speed over four knots. Last year they were second and now deserved winners of this splendid and sublimely organized Raid.

And we? A too low mast or something else? In any case, Maartje and I have enjoyed it very much!

**Hans Manschot**