

English translation of the article from Zeilen,  
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Translator: Csaba Hanyi

Sylvia and Erik Wybenga like adventurous journeys. Their boat, Time & Tide, is an open, two masted boat fit for sailing or rowing. Her Spartan character does not temper their desire for excessive trips. For the last two years they participated in the Great Glen Raid in Scotland. This year, in mid summer they traveled with boat and trailer to Helsinki to join Raid Finland. The crew consisted of their three sons: Ebele, Titus, and Tijn.

Raid Finland, An uncommon family vacation, a rowing – sailing trip through a fascinating archipelago, by Sylvia Wybenga.

"Nothing but damn fir trees" we are reading on the listed complaints of Ebele. "For pretty girls you need not go that far". During the planning of this holiday I have asked him to write down his conflicts to the plan with a promise to honestly evaluate these and consider the outcome. Our boys are 15, 12, and 9 years old. They certainly have some experience with their parents' whims. What would be in it for them, amongst weird boatlovers of a certain age, in a country where the mosquito's easily outnumber the pretty girls, (and if any, they speak an impossible language)?

Yes, what could Erik and I guarantee? We turned ourselves over to somebody who has never before organized such a trip: Mike Hanyi, who seems to be the right person for this Raid and has traveled the area in his own beautiful boat. That appeals to us. He set the trip for 100 miles, starting in Helsinki and travel east through a fascinating archipelago. We knew little of the Finnish coast, but we discovered from a chart a nuclear generating plant in Lovisa and petrochemical industry in Porvoo. What we can guarantee the children is a unique experience, but just what type that is uncertain. We are just as curious about the journey.

The magic word is participation. Ebele takes charge of route descriptions and sets his sight on filming. Titus and Tijn clean the boat in their own fashion, in exchange for a bag of sweets. Titus attends to the hull with a paintroller full of soft soap, Tijn hangs the garden hose in the boat and by pumping water he flushes the bilge through. It is effective cleaning, followed by a great water fight.

The Raid assembled a mixed party sailing a number of very different boats. As the raid company met for the first briefing in the Helsinki Sailing Club, we notice that we are the only Dutch participants in this international company. The official language is English, but there is only one British participant, Terence Newell. In the total of 19 boats twelve different nationalities are represented.

There is an Italian who sailed a boat over from Estonia with a Danish skipper, there are three French boats, three Germans, and eight Finns. The organizer Mike's American father, Csaba Hanyi, sailed in a locally chartered boat with a Swedish partner, an arrangement through the dating service since they both came without a boat.

Mike's Coquina is a beautiful boat which the famous Herreshoff designed for himself. Two boats were launched for the first time only three days before the begin of Raid Finland: Seppo Narinen's home built Penni, a Haven 12.5; and Signe, a robust seaworthy sloop with wrought iron fittings as if it were a barn door, built by the Koggom School for boat building. Terence makes it still more laid back, his PlyViking was sitting in clamps on the quay as we arrived. To save travel expenses, his boat was transported as building material on top of his car.

For our children it is a delightful reunion with their Danish friend from the first Great Glen Raid, Jesper Rasmussen. He is now part of the Danish sea scout team. All in all there are ten or twelve children. Their means of communication: swimming. Pack cleverly, a special art.

The charts passed out at these briefings were green/yellow/white for land, shallow water, deep water respectively. We mark us the best route to follow while trying to get used to the notation of the charts and the waters. Also new for us is the marking of rocks above, and below the waterline. A charming gentleman, Magnus Holmberg, explains the first stage with the help of a projector. If one could only remember ('save') everything he tells one would be safe in all weather conditions.

There is an hour time difference with Holland, so the following morning as we go to breakfast at 7:30, it is 6:30 for us. You notice this on Tijn, who is cold and moody. Fortunately, a sponsor brought boxes of sweets. I am glad that we can leave much of the luggage in our minibus. We shall be able to get to the cars regularly during the trip. Still to pack well, stow the gear, and be able to fetch quickly what is needed is an art in itself. Sliding on my

back under the deck where some practical tie downs are mounted I attach the water tight bags in good order. It is a job in confined space, but it creates space for the oars and for children who wish to disappear.

## Wind in the sails.

The sun has been already up for hours and the yacht harbor of Lauttasaari is full of blue algae. Then finally, we cast off and get wind in the sails. The wind is northerly. The start is seaward before the wind. Today it will not be a genuine race, rather a festive survey of the waterfront of Helsinki, a city on the open sea. Tijn and Titus are sailing, Ebele enjoys the foredeck. It was some trouble getting here ( we missed the ferry from Stockholm) but this is already more beautiful than we expected.

The fleet sails wing on wing between huge ships. This Raid Finland fleet threatens noone! Why then the word Raid as name for such a friendly competitive journey? These waters attracted many conquerors. The Finnish maritime history is possibly bloodier than that of Scotland. The originally Scottish word Raid means a marauding expedition as a quick surprise attack on a part of enemy territory as well as to test the enemy's strong points.

It seems that the testing in this case will be restricted to our ability to find our way on these coastal waters. Fortresses which were built to protect the seaward approaches mark out journey. These are now splendid stopping points and the us surrounding Finns are hospitable and cordial.

The following week we sailed in fourteen races on a variety of courses. Islands of all sizes define the course. There are many idyllic country houses with sauna and landing piers on the rocky coast. They inspire in Titus a wish to move to Finland, as do the smooth rocks, above, on and under the water line. "I would like to take such a vacation with my own children someday", says he. We are enjoying unbelievably beautiful weather, the north wind does not bring chills and the west wind does not deliver rain. Inbetween we have delightful sailing, sheltered stretches are a bit more difficult for our morale.

Ebele is balancing on deck, holding the video camera with his long arms high above. He is sure in his element, for he even hangs overboard with that thing, so he can get our bow wave from the front. The water is brackish, but bubbly like blue water. One German participant, Ingo List, promises to make a mini DVD from Ebele's video.

Struggle Not enough wind brings out the worst in a sailor. "This is the worst thing in my whole life" grumbles Tijn "Sailing without wind". Perhaps sail & row will save some holiday feeling. As soon as one boat starts to row, all the others break out the oars.

With the mixed group of boats everybody is trying to find another boat to compete with. We are racing primarily against PIRMIL, a boat of the French builder, Francois Lelievre. When the wind blows we are mostly ahead, but when we are rowing we have to work mightily to keep up with them. At a crossing with weak wind we are fighting sailing and rowing to stay ahead of Pirmil. Two light boats are before us, even out of sight, we struggle for the third place. Meanwhile, we have to pay attention in locating all rocky islands to monitor the correct course, a disadvantage when leading the way. It is an honest race and we like the crew of Pirmil. They have Willy on board, who is also fifteen. We are rowing like galley slaves, happy that we have plenty of drinking water.

## Do not cut buoys.

Organizer Mike emphasized at the skippers meeting that the marked course must be followed "We honor those marks" is still ringing in our ears. Suddenly, the red sails of the Danish boat appear from behind a long island. They have taken a considerable shortcut. To our amazement we see Mike on board, he knows the waters like his own backyard. We are still ahead and we are following the prescribed route. Mike however, is standing like a frenzied Peter Pan on the Danish foredeck and shows with extended hand a safe route outside the buoys. The Danish boys are rowing and paddling like crazy under Mike's encouragement and pass us with triumphant roar. On our boat this creates a crisis. We are angry, this can't be happening. We can't be made into laughing stock by the organizer of the Raid, especially before the Danish, while we are trying to show the children sportsmanship and an honest competition. He damages his own authority!

What can we do? Try to stay ahead of Pirmil, in which we succeed. We try to calm ourselves with difficulty. The small ones decide to throw Mike in the water at lunch. I think that is a great idea, except that Mike is quick and fairly big. Fortunately, we arrive at the most enchanting lunch place: It is an old smugglers nest.

Children into the water. Erik talks to Mike one on one. I turn on him the cold shoulder and seek comfort with Nathalie and the lovely lunch. The Danes give out one round for the whole family that evening to atone for the matter.

Enjoy it together.

"Where would we be without sauna" muses Susa. She is six month's pregnant and worked along with her husband Mike a few years in preparing this Raid. She has just bent her long body in two on the floor, whilst filling up the wood burning stove for the men, whose turn is after us. Living tradition in her caring movements. One experiences the same in Laura's puttering about with water, she prepares comfortable washing water not only for herself, but also for whoever comes next. I hold the lid of a giant hot water container for her next to the stove with a stick, for the water is actually boiling. Gee, hot it is. Four West European woman and four Finnish share a happy bit of sweating every night. These Finnish ladies do not rush for an ice cold dive, no, easy does it, and lukewarm is fine too. The daily sauna is a ritual with an important social function which all enjoy. Angelika from Berlin is amazed that we did not take the sauna together with the men. That is more for students or families say the Finnish among us. I am pleased that I do not have to witness the physical details of all forty male participants. We are in the sauna protected from all the immediate raging impulses of the us surrounding men folk. That too must be a traditional treat.

Nevertheless, the Raid is marked by shared pleasure. There is no clique forming, no hierarchy, all are displaying a relaxed and caring manner toward each other. The routing and the catering are extremely successful. The organic farm of Labby takes care of all meals for several days in the craziest locations with the highest quality imaginable.

We are sleeping always on shore, also in the craziest locations and pay for it nightly. This ranges from couches in the teachers lounge at the high school in Porvoo, to the stage of a 19th century lumberjack club, to a private house with its own sauna to be reached by nightly rowing under a full moon. Many participants are camping or sleeping in their boat. All children are getting along with each other perfectly. They explore the sauna, swim twice per day, water smoothes over any language problems. Time to relax is structured into the event, the total concept of the raid is excellent.

Titus takes during the last dinner Ebele's camera and captures his brothers enchantment with a lovely blonde beauty from Helsinki as they enjoy the last moments of an ultimate summer vacation. He was awarded a place in the credits of Ebele's video.

## Sidebar: Raid Finland.

Raid Finland is an annual sporting touristy event led by Mike Hanyi, in cooperation with Lovisa Klassika Batar, a sailing club of classic boats. Participation is restricted to open boats of minimum 4.5 m length and maximum of 8 meters, (monohulls). Maximum weight is 600 kg. Divided into different classes with a handicap system: Only rowing, Sailing and rowing, Only sailing.

Objective:

To experience the nicest Finnish sailing routes in international company using interesting boats in a regular competition. The organization takes care of the accommodations, catering and sight seeing.

Route 2002:

The archipelago of East Nyland, from the Helsinki sailing club in Lauttasaari, 130 miles easterly over the gulf of Finland to Loviisa. Next year the west coast of Finland. All sections were sailed as a race with meetings, starting procedures and charts. Logistics: Participants can camp, or sleep on their own boat. Boats will have protected mooring places. Three meals a day are furnished and drinking water is provided. Sauna, swimming water, and dry toilets are available daily, also when the overnight is on the mainland there is a possibility to get to your own car.