



# LOG OF THE YACHT AVALANCHE OF ALDERSHOT

For the Beachley to the Baltic cruise 1963

Crew

Skipper Capt. S Townsend MBE. RE.

1st Mate A/T Nichol DW.

2nd Mate A/T Ryan J

Purser A/T Jones

Piper A/T Cameron

Crew A/T Huckle

A/T Deadman

A/T Little

Engineer A/T L/Cpl Belcher

# AVALANCHE OF ALDERSHOT

Designed by: - KROGERWERFT

Built by: - KROGERWERFT  
at WARNEMUNDE in 1936

Weight: 26 tons

Signal letters G.D. B.

L.O.A. 56ft

L.W.L. 39ft 1Inch

Ensign Blue

Burgee R.E.Y.C.





**1<sup>st</sup> August 1963**

At Hamburg we were met by the skipper who had transport in the form of a NATO. Mini bus to take us to Kiel, where a meal was awaiting us. We were then shown the Boat, I had heard a lot about Avalanche but I don't think I really knew what to expect anyway I liked what I saw, she was a very 'trim craft'.

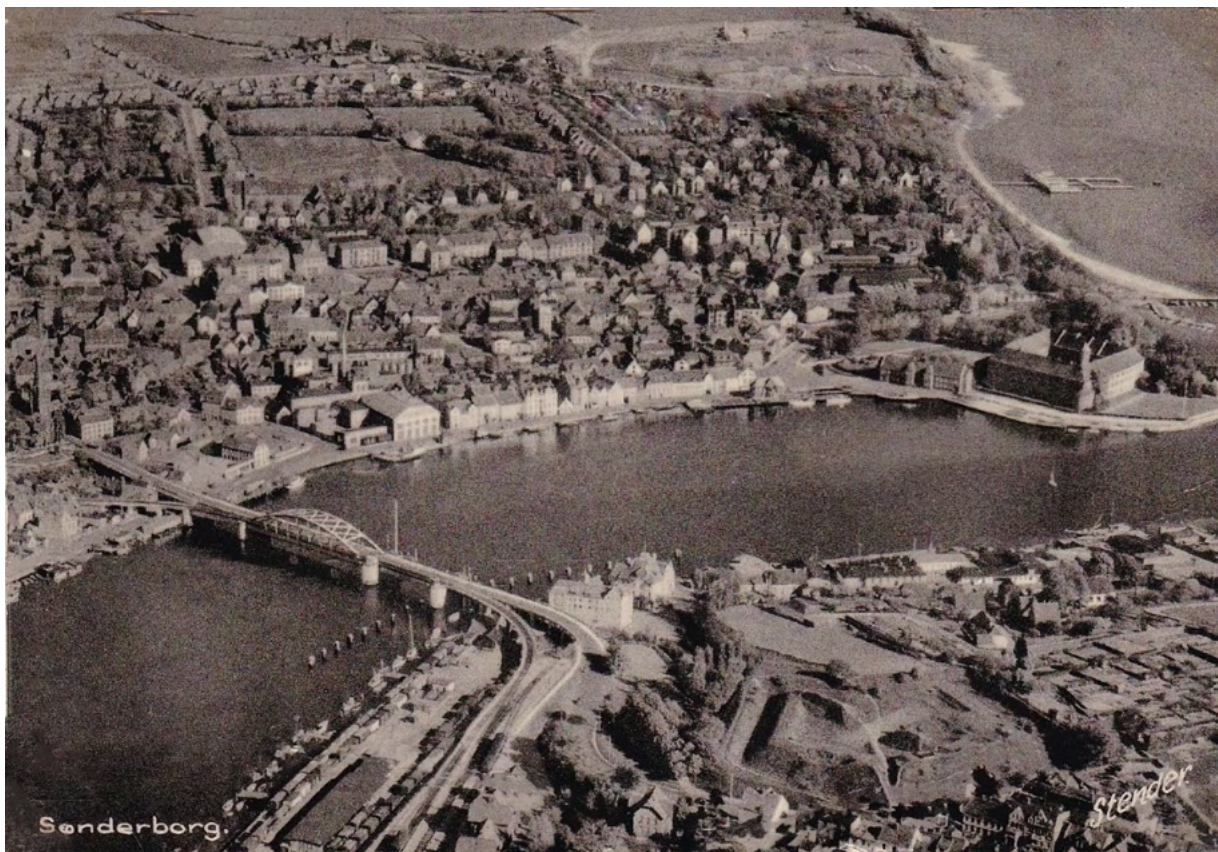
After we had unpacked our gear and stowed it, we went up to the club room to spend the evening, the skipper then showed us a film of last year's cruise. It was mainly shown to give us some idea what we were up against. I think it worked, at least most of us, if not all of us went to bed thinking.

**2<sup>nd</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - NNE**

**Force 3.**

The skipper told us we were to start today, a day early at around noon, in the meantime we were to sort out our finances. Later in the morning we were shown the mechanics of the boat by one of the clubs staff. We cast off at 12.40 and motored out of the club into the Kiel Fjord where we hoisted sails and started



tacking north out of the fjord. I noticed the German navy were very active in the fjord with MTB' S. We passed Bulk East at 1415 and set course for Sonderborg.

At 16.00 we sighted the German sail training ship 'Gorch Foch and altered course to intercept. Shortly after we altered course we sighted many champagne bottles which must have come from the ship we were heading for, we intercepted and piped the side of the 'Gorch Foch' at 17.30. The course was corrected and we set off for Sonderborg again.

The wind had been light most of the time after we left the fjord and we had to use the motor more than we wished. After a pretty uneventful sail we reached Sonderborg at 21.00 and docked at the ferry moorings. The customs officer came on-board and cleared us for our stay in Denmark. After a brief look at the town I retired to my bed.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - E            Force 3-4**

Got up early, went along to the local ship chandlers to buy a pair of shorts. After breakfast we slipped moorings and headed for Svendborg. Sails were hoisted after we had motored out of Sonderborg harbour. In the morning the wind was light, but it picked up and we made a steady 6 knots. We had to beat most of the way and found it rather difficult cooking when nothing would stay still. We were to meet the 'Svanen and Thyra of the Danish navy at Svendborg. Around 16.30 we began to get ready in our track-suits for the salute.

At 17.00 (bang on time) we motored into Svendborg harbour with the crew and piper ready for the salute. 17.10 we piped the side of 'Svanen and Thyra then tied up alongside. The skippers of the two boats invited us to have a meal with them, so we split up into two parties and went on-board. The meal we were to learn was typical of Denmark. I also had my first taste of Danish Aquavit. I was not impressed.

After the dinner we were taken out on the town by the Danish sailors, most of I think ended up in the Casanova which was a local night club, and very nice too. We all drank a little too much that night but we didn't do too badly for it.

The next day August 4th was spent in Svendborg looking around. The weather was very good and it stayed that way all day. The shops however were closed, it was Sunday, so we could only just look. In the afternoon we went for a swim in their version of a swimming pool.

At night the rains came and we had some bad showers. Tonight some of us decided to go to the pictures, after searching for nearly an hour we found one and approached, we found the ticket office only to find the clerk could not speak English. As we could not speak Danish we tried signs, after a further half hour we finally got our tickets. The film was in Danish but we were able to follow it, it was quite good, After the we went back to the boat for a last drink before going to bed.

### **5<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - SSW**

**Force 3-4**

Left Svendborg at 05.00 and motored into the sound to hoist the sails. The sailing was very good today and we had a go at a bit of navigation. Most of us were rather tired and tried to catch up on a bit of sleep when we were watch below.

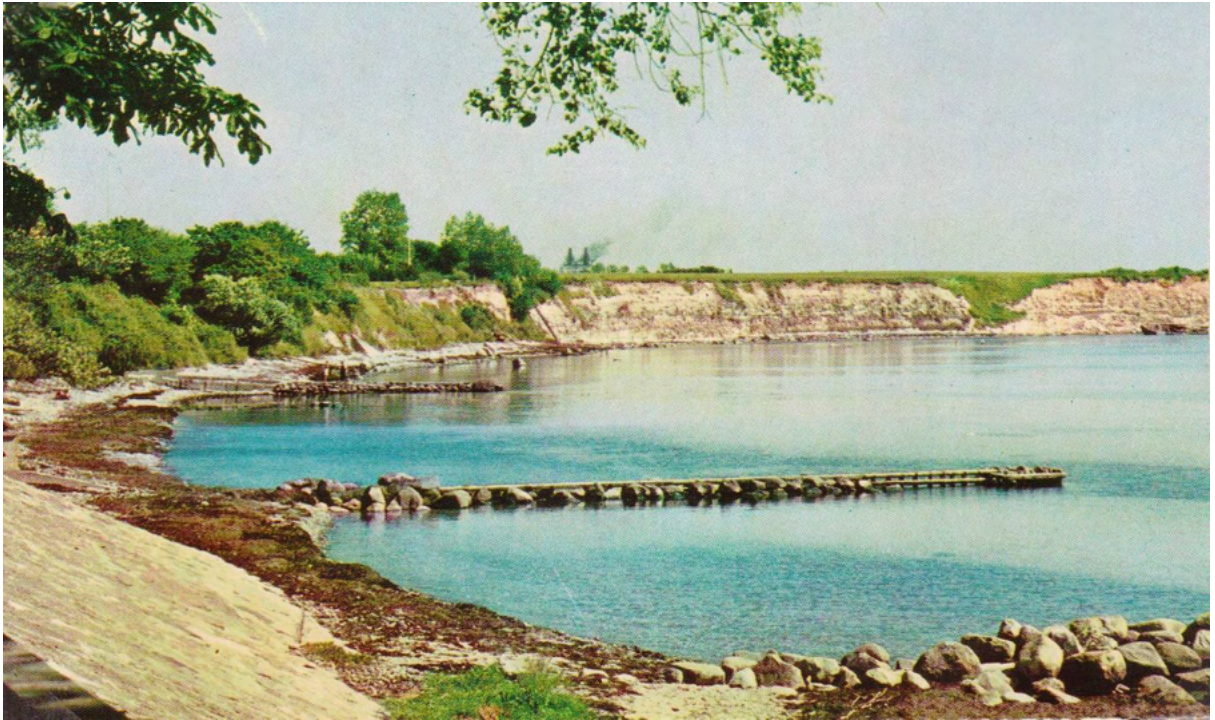
At 13.10 we sailed under the Stormstrom bridge and set course for Stubbekobing reached Stubbekobing at 15. 00 and stopped there to get some food. We motored out again after 2 hours. We made good going for another 4 hours. At 19.00 when we started to cross the bay to Rodvig the wind dropped so we had to motor in. We got in quite late and tied up alongside two coasters and spent the night there.



**6<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - E      Force 2**

Had a look around Rodvig, which was a nice little town that served as a resort for the people of Kobenhavn (Copenhagen). After a late breakfast (or early dinner) we Left Rodvig and set off for Skovshoved which is just north of Kobenhavn.



As we passed Kobenhavn we sailed into the harbour to have a look at the little Mermaid. We motored into Skovshoved at 18.00 and made fast.

We were met by a member of the Royal Danish Yacht Club who told us we had a meal in grounds of their club-house. We were to race against the club the next day so we went to have a look at the boats. After the meal we were taken and shown the Tivoli Gardens. I won't attempt to describe them, I couldn't. You have to see them to believe it.

After the Tivoli I got a taxi back to the boat and bed.



### **7<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

Late morning in bed. When we did get up we went to have a look at the boats we were going to sail. They were Junior Folk Boats, a boat used for training in Denmark. We were taken out with a Danish boy to get used to the boats. We were taken out in the boats twice before the race was due to start. At 18.00 the race started in a good wind which dropped to nothing half way through, it picked up again to enable myself to win.

After the race we had another meal in the club where they gave me a glass (crystal) with the club flag engraved on, it for winning the race. We had a sing-song to end the day, and our visit to Skovshoved.

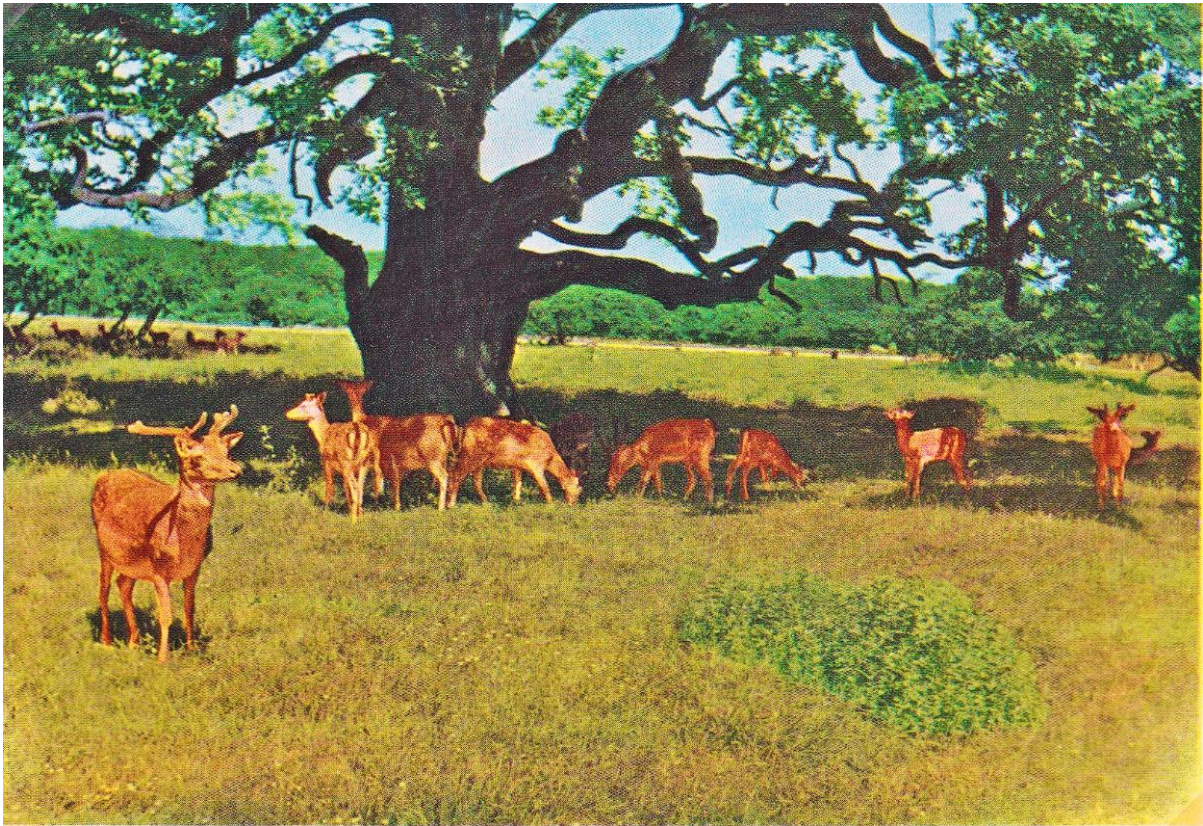
### **8<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - SW      Force 4**

Got up at 08.30 and cleaned up the boat. Had a dinner and left the harbour. The sailing was quite good until we got to the Kattegat where the weather got so bad



we put about to go back, however the weather did improve so we went on to Gillelje under Jib only. We motored into the harbour at 19.15.



**9<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

Bad weather forced us to stay in port all day so we had a good look at the town. It had just about everything it needed. It was in fact a Danish seaside town with quite a nice beach.

In the evening some of us went to the pictures again, this time we got in easier and it was an English film.





**10<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - SW      Force 6**

Motored out of harbour at 06. 30 and hoisted sails to attempt the Kattegat again. After sailing only 20 miles and having to shorten sails twice we put in again to Hundested at 12.55 to stay the rest of the day.

The skipper gave us one of his curries this afternoon it was first class and we ate plenty of it. Apart from the wind the weather was quite good. We had a look at the town, it was typical of all Danish fishing ports. We had an early night to prepare for an early start in the morning.

**11th August 1963**

**Wind: - SW-W      Force 5**

The weather was still bad but it had improved so we stayed a little longer to see if it would get better. We had dinner in the local restaurant and put out at 13.45 and

hoisted shortened sails 10 minutes later. The weather did not improve and we had to shorten sails twice before we reached Aarhus 15 hours later.

Crossing the Kattegat was the worst experience I have had in my sailing life.

At midnight most of the crew went to bed, but three of us stayed up with the skipper. We had a little trouble when water got into part of the electrics and caused a short circuit. In the early hours of the morning we took down the sails and motored into Aarhus. We tied up at 04.30 on August 12th.

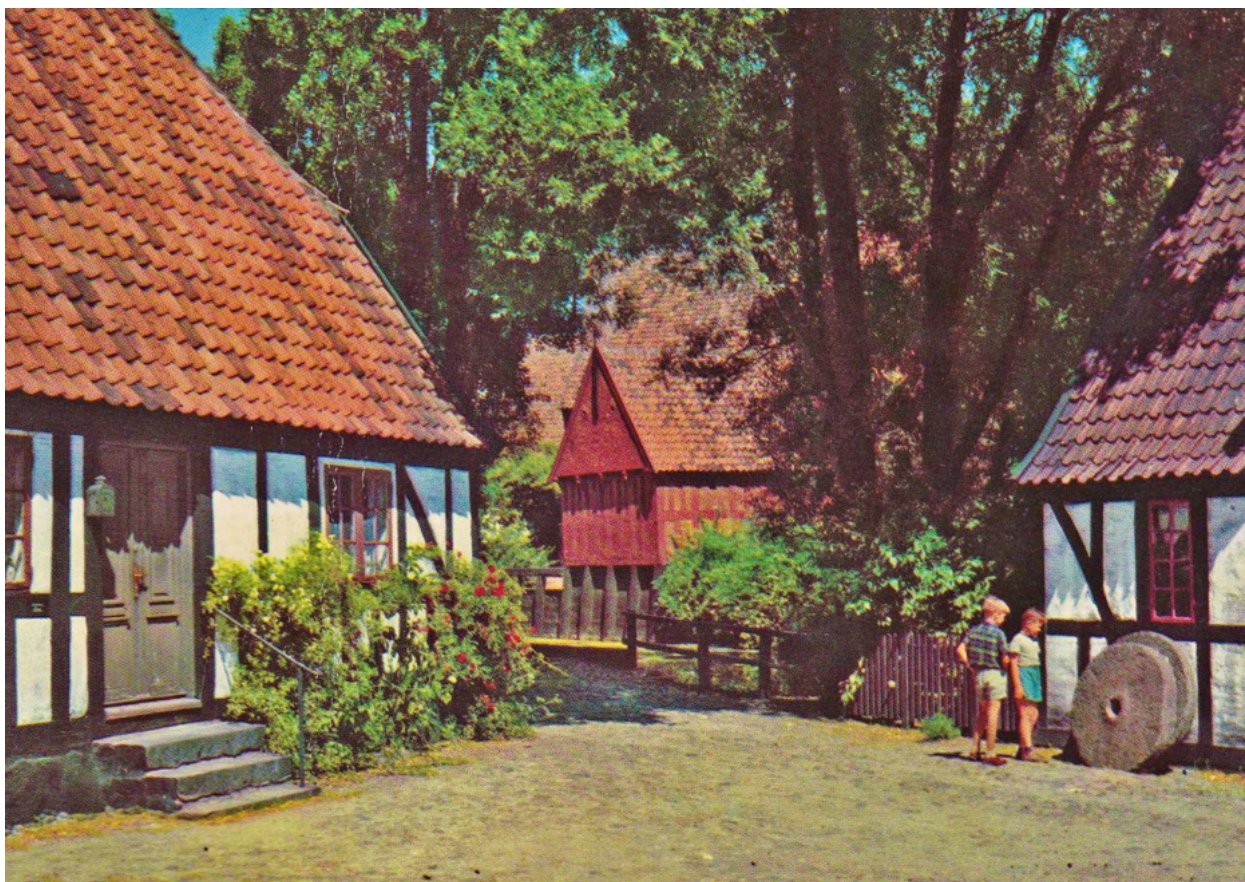
### **12th August 1963**

Got up at 11.30 and cleaned the boat, put right the electrics, and stored the sails. Had our dinner then got ready to go out.

13.45 a staff car of the Danish navy picked us up and took us to 'DEN GAMLE BY' (the old town).









After spending the afternoon in the old town we went back to the boat to have a snack before we were picked up by Commander Brink and taken to his house for a party, with more Aquavit.

The party went of very well with the piper doing his bit as usual. After the party we returned to the boat and had a drink before going to bed.



**13<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

Another late day in bed. When we got up the boat was covered in sawdust from the ship moored behind us which was unloading timber. After we cleaned up the boat we went and had a Look at the town during the afternoon. At 17.00 we went down to the public baths and had a shower and a Turkish bath Danish style.

After tea I went to the pictures again and then on to have a look at the local night life before returning to the boat fairly late.



**14th August 1963**

**Wind: - WSW**

**Force 3-4**

Got up at 07.30 and had breakfast, Commander Brink came onboard and we all signed his visitors book.

At 09.20 we motored out of Aarhus harbour and hoisted sails at 09.30. After sailing in good weather for two hours we sighted the Svanen and Thyra and tried without success to signal them.



We sailed on passed Horsens Fjord at 12.30. After sailing all afternoon we started the motor and took down the sails as we entered Vejle Fjord. We entered the harbour at 18.00. Later in the evening we entertained Dr. Bruun and his family onboard, we were invited to his house the next day which gave us good reason to prolong our otherwise short visit.

**15<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

The weather today was bad, it never stopped raining. Because of the bad weather we could not wash our shirts for the visit to Dr. Bruun's house, so we went in search of a laundry, we found one with the help of the local travel bureau. We had our shirts cleaned in 1½ hours when we decided we also wanted our trousers pressed. The bureau saw to those too.

The party at Dr. Bruun's was first class, his daughters had laid on everything, including a female for everyone, and very nice they were too. The party went well until midnight when it folded up.

Despite the bad weather we had a good look around the town. It had a couple of night clubs along with many more social fittings.

### **Vejle - The Church & Mill**







**16<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - WSW**

**Force 3-4**

09-40 we motored out of Vejle harbour, hoisted sails and set course for Assens. We left the fjord at 11.50 and set out for the Little Belt. We passed under the Little Belt bridge at 13.50. The Little Belt is quite narrow and as the wind was on the nose we had quite an interesting afternoon beating up the Belt.

We arrived at Assens at 16.45 and were moved twice before we finally tied up at 16.55. It was only a small town with not a lot to offer in night life so we went to the pictures then back to boat and bed.



## Assens

### The statue of Willemoes



### The Harbour





**17<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - ESE**

**Force 3**

We motored out of Assens at 11.00 after another late morning in bed. The wind was on the nose again and we had to beat all the way to Faaborg. At 14.10 passed Kranich our sister ship going in the other direction. After beating up the narrow approach to Faaborg we took down the sails and motored in at 17.00 with the pipes playing away.

We were met by a member of the local sailing club who told us we had a party in their club rooms, which were built by the Royal Engineers last year.

Females were provided for us again and were of the same high standard as before. The party started off with a huge meal with more Aquavit which I was getting used to by now. This was to be our last party in Denmark so we made the most of it, it went strong into the early hours of the morning before breaking up. We were reluctant to return to the boat that night when I finally got back to the boat it was 03.15 in the morning.

**18<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

It rained most of the morning so I stayed in bed; when it did stop I got up. After dinner I took a good look at the town. Most of the buildings were very old they were a sort of 'Old Town' of their own. I went up into the clock tower, which is a famous land-mark in the town, and signed the visitors book.

There is no night life in Faaborg at all so in the evening some of us went along to a hotel just outside the town and had a little party of our own to round off our visit to Denmark I took along the Danish girl who was allotted to me at the party yesterday.



**19<sup>th</sup> August 1963**

**Wind: - S                  Force 4**

Motored out of Faaborg at 10.15. At 11.00 hoisted sails and set course for Germany. The wind was again on the nose which had us beating again. We passed the Danish sail training ship at 11. 30 (Georg Stege).

The sailing was good but uneventful, though we didn't make a great deal of speed. Toward evening the wind dropped and at 17.50 we started the motor and took down the sails. Later both sails were hoisted again for about an hour but the wind went again so the sails were taken down and stored.

The weather started to go bad and as we motored into Kiel Fjord at 20.05 the rains came. After a wet trip up the fjord we motored into the moorings of the B.K.Y.C. at Stickenhorne at 21.30. A plate of soup was provided for us before we retired to bed for the last time in Avalanche. I had to sleep on the floor of the main cabin because my bunk leaked.



20<sup>th</sup> August 1963

Cleaned Avalanche and handed her back to the club. We then packed our gear and prepared to leave, we were refunded about 20 German Marks each before we left. We caught our return train at Lubeck to make sure we got seats.

When we got to the Hook of Holland we found our new ferry had had to be replaced by an older one but we all got berths so there was no real problem. We all came out of customs as rich as we went in then went on to London where we each went our different ways.

During our stay in Denmark we were made most welcome everywhere we went, the piper and drummer played a big part in the trip of course. All we had this year to offer our hosts after a grand meal with all the trimmings, girls etc, was some real Scottish music. Last year's cruise went out to Denmark armed with half a dozen school shields to give to their hosts. This year we couldn't get the shields in time so we decided to get them just the same and post them to the people concerned.

I think we all enjoyed the trip immensely and thanks go mainly to Mr. L.T. Salter who organised the trip and to Captain Stan Townsend MBE. RE. who skippered the boat. He also did the organising at the German end. The commandant eased the trip on the pockets a little by giving us each £10 towards the fare.

I hope there is another Baltic cruise next year and more people jump at the chance to go. It is well worth the time, trouble, and well worth the expense. The same trip in as a civilian would cost £117 for 17 days, ours cost us £53 including the commandant's £10 for 19 days and we got about £2 back at the end. Not bad going at all.

Bill Nichol

1963



**Smedegade Aeroskobing**



**Rodvig Harbour**



**Vejle Harbour**





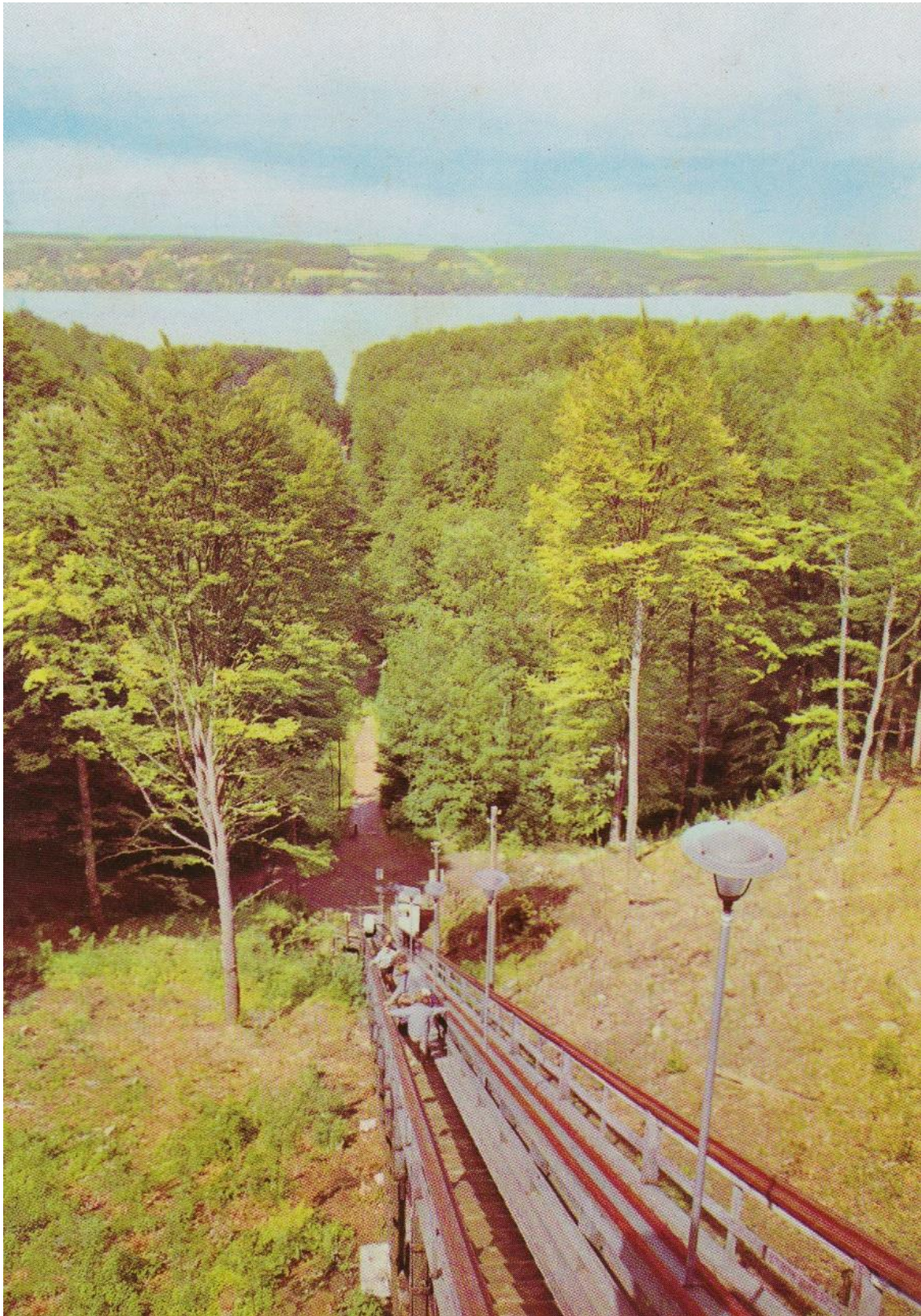
**Vejle Town Hall**



**Munkebjerg Escalator - Vejle**

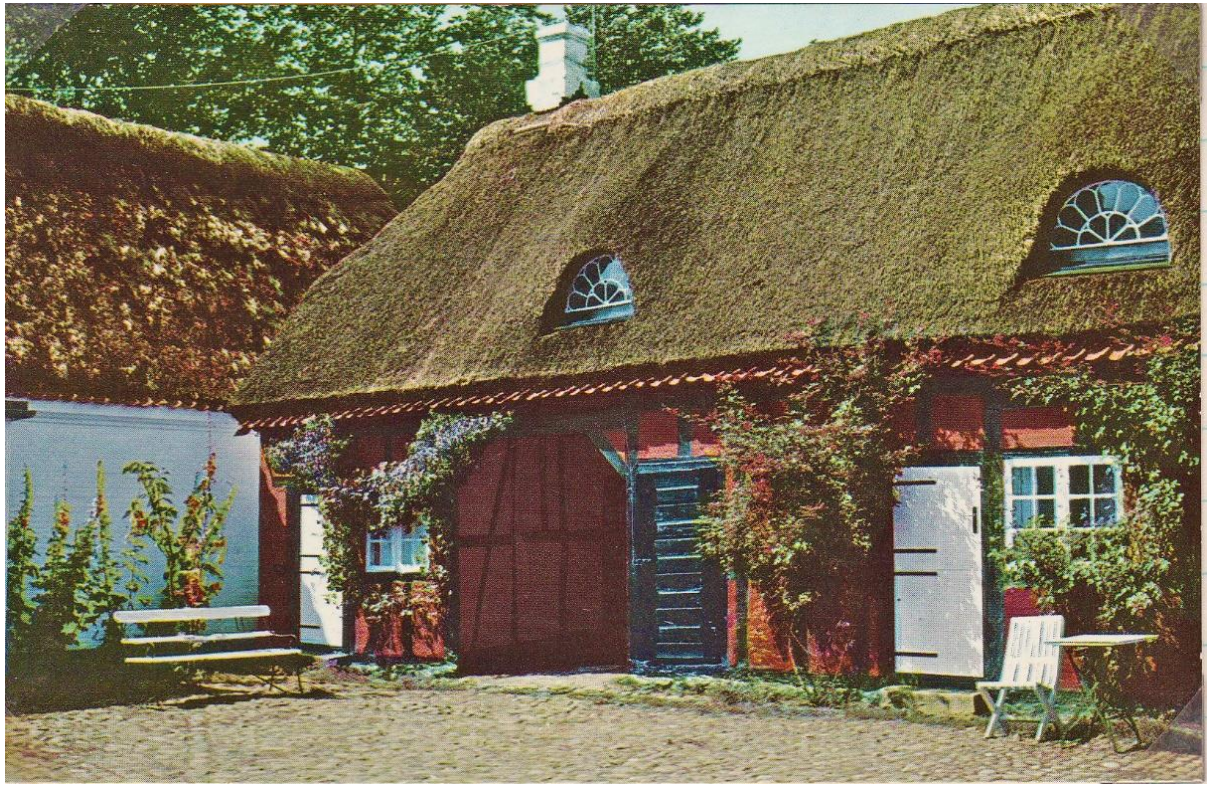
At the time (1963) reputed to be the longest in the world





**Falsled Kro**





Assens Town Square







Once upon a time  
-a thousand years ago-  
there was a king of  
**DENMARK**  
named Gorm the Old.  
All through the years  
his family has ruled  
the oldest kingdom  
of the world, and  
the present king  
Frederik the Ninth  
is a descendant of  
the old king Gorm.

