

SEBBE ALS - a viking ship today



The Viking Ship Society SEBBE ALS, Augustenborg.

The ship society is an independent society, who in the period 1967 - 1969 built the ship of the type fast going warship, a copy of the wreck No. 5 from the Skulderslev finds at Roskilde fjord.

The ship, which was launched and named SEBBE ALS in 1969, was built according to the drawings of the original ship and by using the same tools as the "old vikings".

The purpose of the ship was to verify the sail capability of the Viking ships as well as the pleasure for sailing and this in a ship built out of natural material and without any motor noise in order to hear the whistling from the past.

Since the launch in 1969 the ship has been on many trips, both in Denmark and in the foreign countries. The interest for the ship is still large and some of the "originally vikings" maintain and sail the ship together with many "new vikings", who are interested in working and having fun.

In excess of the Viking ship we have also built a "naust", which was ready in 1972. The naust" is a boathouse built after a find from Norway.

In 1978 an "ottemandsfarer" was launched. A copy of a boat from the Faeroe Islands. The boat has 8 oars and a coxswain. The boat has 2 masts and is equipped with foresail, mainsail and spanker. The boat is named OT-TAR ALS.

The ships and "naust" are the center for a lot of activities

through out the year. In the wintertime we are maintaining the ships and the "naust" and in the summer time a lot of different arrangements take place. This is of great use to both the members and a large spectators whenever we are turning up.

The Members and the Crew of the Ship Society

When the sun of spring break through all the activities around the ships and "naust" are really starting up. You will meet people at all ages working hard with all the various doings. We have members, aspirants and families who are scraping, grinding, painting etc. in order to get the ships and "naust" ready for the sailing season.

The members are found in all classes of the community - and everybody is equal in the common interest - maintenance and sailing the ships.

The rules for being a member of the society are simple. Through work on the ships and "naust" you have to prove your interest for the activities of ship society and not until then you can become a member.

The society is democratic and the members elect a committee at the yearly general meeting. The task of the committee is to coordinate the activities of the ship society and keep the accounts according to the rules of the ship society.

The solidarity and interest around the ships and "naust" turn all hard work into a pleasure.
SEBBE as a Viking ship

Wreck No. 5 is one of the finds in Skulderslev by Roskilde Fjord.

The type of ship is a fast going warship, i.e. a long and slim ship with many oars and a relative large sail, a fast ship both going for sail or going by oars.

In 1967 we got the drawings and started building the ship. The ship is built with copies of the original tools. In order to learn using the most important tool, the "skar-axe", we started up building a "bulhus" (type of house from the viking period) made out of chopped and cutted planks.

The sail trips through out the years have proved that the vikings were great shipbuilders. They were able to build ships, which were very fast and also very strong and seaworthy. It is a great pleasure in a good wind to pass a modern boat of fibreglass.

One of the secrets of the favourable sailing characteristics is that the ship is built out of chopped planks. This means that you do not cut the grains of the tree with a saw, but keep the full strength and flexibility and therefore you can cut the thickness of each plank and by means of this the ship will also keep a total smaller total weight.

The total construction gives a light ship which in the waves can twist like a pea pod without being damage. The ship was built according to the advice and drawings from the Viking Museum in Roskilde.

The purpose was to built and sail with SEBBE ALS without any scientific experiment. Through out the years we have made a few modifications on the sail and the rigging, however, this has not been made done in order to reach the highest speed.

If we have to do so, the sail and the ballast etc. must be adjusted to a ship with a crew of 25 persons. This will reduce the sailing characteristics with a crew of only 15 persons, who today are able to sail the ship without any problems.

The longest sailing trip

According to a saga a viking with ship and crew sailed from the viking village Kaupang at Tønsberg in the beginning of the Oslo Fjord to Hedeby in Schleswig using 5 days and 5 nights i.e. 120 hours.

We would like to verify this saga by sailing the opposite way.

The tour was carried through in 1972. We started in Schleswig, sailed along the east cost of Jutland where the weather were against us. The last lap we started from Skagen with 30° C and almost no wind and so it went on the next 2 days and 2 nights, all along we pulled the oars across Skagerak.

However, sunburned and the hands full of blisters we succeeded.

At the lighthouse at Færder in the beginning of the Oslo Fjord the wind came and the last lap through the fjord was done at record time.

The goal has been reached and the best of all was that the logbook showed only 114 hours. By this we had verified that the saga was true.

SEBBE as ambassador in foreign countries

The vikings are well known all over, not always in friendly way, however, as a considerable era in history of the world. With a true copy of a vikingship we have not been able to avoid awareness through out the world. This has given the members many good trips where we at the same time have represented Denmark at big national red-letter days in foreign countries.

We can mention:

The 200 years anniversary for the independence of US on July 4th, 1976. We sailed up the Hudson River in New York.

The 150 years anniversary for the independence of Belgium in June 1980. Here we sailed on the Peronne lake. At this occasion we had the opportunity to hand over a present to the King Baudoin.

The 900 years city anniversary of Newcastle in July 1980. Here we sailed on the Tyne River.

The 1000 years city anniversary of Dublin in July 1988, where we sailed on the Liffey River.

These trips have not much too do with real vikingship sailing, as we do not get deep water beneath the keel, but only short trips with guests of honour on board.

However, we are pleased to participate in trips like these, as we have the chance for adventures, which keep the members together.

On these occasions we put on the viking "dress" (helmets, swords, axes and shields) and try to look as our bloodthirsty forefathers, however, with a smile.

In the fjord of Augustenborg from the harbour to the "naust" we have also sailed with hundreds of guests from all over the world. At the "naust" we have told the history of our forefathers and ourselves. Africans, Japanese, Americans, Australians and a lot of other nationalities have learned about the old Danish viking culture.

SEBBE as movie star

Throughout the years the vikings have been a good story for the film companies and TV companies producing serious programmes. In order to carry through a programme like this, you need a viking ship, and for these purposes we have been involved a several times.

Of film shootings we can mention:

National Geographic Society, US - Shooting of a sail trip in 1971.

NRK (Norwegian Television) - shootings to a film produced in 1973.

French Television - Shootings to a section in a film "The history of the ships" produced in 1978.

English Television - Shootings from a Viking meeting at Mosgård, Århus in 1979.

French Television - Shootings to a science fiction movie for children in 1981.

DR (Danish Television) - Shootings of a sail trip with SEBBE ALS in 1982.

Many others have filmed us and each time we have been lucky to get some money, which are used for the ships and "naust".

SEBBE as PR

Through out the years the vikings and their ships have been a good publicity theme. In this connection we have been used for a lot of various activities especially for beer with the point of origin in mead.

We have been sailing for the big Danish breweries in foreign countries and also here in Denmark.

The ship is not built for commercial reasons, but we have bound ourselves to keep the ships and "naust" both for the sake of ourselves and of our descendants.

In order to keep this promise it has been necessary to raise money for the maintenance of the ships and "naust".



Sebbe on Skagerak on the trip to Norway 1972



Sebbe in New York 1976 for the 200 years anniversary

Facts about Sebbe Als

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|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Residens: | Augustenborg |
| Ship type: | Fast warship |
| Built in year: | 1967- 1969 |
| Material: | Ash on oak |
| Length: | 17 meters |
| Keel length: | 12 meters |
| Wide: | 2.5 meters |
| Mast heigh: | 9 meters |
| Sail area: | 48 square meters |
| Number of oars: | 24 (12 on each side) |
| Draught: | 0.6 meter (without rudder) |
| Rudder Draught: | 1.5 meters |
| Max. measured speed: | by sail 12 knots |
| Mav. measured speed: | by oars 4 knots |
| Max. number of crew: | 30 persons |



Facts about Ottar Als

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|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Residens: | Augustenborg |
| Ship type: | Færøboat (Ottemannarfarer) |
| Built in year: | 1977 - 1978 |
| Material: | Ash |
| Length: | 9 meters |
| Wide: | 1.8 meters |
| Mast high: | 6 meters |
| Sail area: | 10 square meters |
| Number of oars: | 8 (4 on each side) |
| Draught: | 0.5 meters |
| Max. measured speed: | by sail 9 knots |
| Max. measured speed: | with oars 4 knots |
| Max. number of crew: | 9 persons |



Facts about the Naust

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|----------------|-------------------------|
| Residens: | Augustenborg |
| Type: | Copy of found in Norway |
| Built in year: | 1972 - 73 |
| Length: | 23 meters |
| Wide: | max. 6 meters |

