

CHART STORIES

(lightboxtekst)

Illum, Horsehoved and Vigø

A partly submerged continuous ridge starts at Helnæs, traverses the islands of Illum and Vigø, before ending west of Faldsled at Bjerghammer – as shown on the chart. In some places, the ridge breaks the surface; it reaches a height of 9 metres on Illum and 15 metres on Vigø. Between those two islands, is the small islet of Horsehoved, which barely reaches above sea level. Both Illum and Vigø have been inhabited for a very long time. Each of the three islands was copyhold belonging to Hvedholm Gods (Hvedholm Manor) until 1870, when they were sold to the copyholder. Illum and Vigø were used for traditional farming.

From the sea, one gazes in amazement upon the beautiful building that was built as a summerhouse for a member of the Illum family. The house has since been sold and no longer belongs to the Illum family; but it is still only used during the summer months.



Photo: Henning Terkelsen

On Illum, there are two farms and a villa built in the 1920s by a member of the Illum family. None of the houses have a permanent resident and are all only used for leisure purposes. Through the years, Vigø has mainly been used for agriculture. A designer who lived there throughout the year built the first permanently inhabited house in the 1960s. In later years, the house was sold and is now in the possession of the Grønlykke family – the owners of the gourmet restaurant Faldsled Kro (Faldsled Inn) – these days, it is only used for leisure purposes.

The entire area is absolutely worth a visit by boat or kayak. There are no jetties on the islands, but the Danish Sailing Association has put down a number of anchor buoys. Moreover, there are possibilities of casting anchor for all wind directions. Nature on the islands is undisturbed – and you must respect the bird's breeding periods if you decide to go ashore.

Faldsled

Today, Faldsled – or Falsled, as it is sometimes spelt – is best known for the gourmet restaurant Faldsled Kro (Faldsled Inn). When viewing the town from the sea, few would guess that it used to be a shipping town. Due to its location, this farming village had what was known as a “royally privileged” inn, and in the early 19th century, it evolved from a traditional agricultural society with ample opportunities for subsidiary commercial fishing in Helnæs Bugt (Helnæs Bay) to a society in which most people earned their primary income from the shipping business – both locally and internationally.

In 1820, this change was intensified when a ship's carpenter moved to Faldsled after marrying a local farmer's daughter in 1811. During the next quarter of a century, he helped build more than 50 well smacks, cutters, schooners and galleasses.

The ships were not only built for the local population, but also for the merchants and shippers of nearby Faaborg. All the ships were built by eye; i.e. without the use of drawings and directly on the beach. The small community grew gradually, and one shipbuilder followed the other. In the mid-19th century, the town flourished. Towards the end of the century, however, the number of vessels hailing from Faldsled decreased. Steamships and, later on, diesel-powered ships eventually took over the trade, as they were less dependent on weather, particularly on wind. This development was also fuelled by the emergence of railroads that managed to deliver goods and passengers on time.

Bøjden Harbour

Because of the short distance to the town of Fynshav on Als, Bøjden has long served as a ferry station. In the early 19th century, two sailed and rowed ferries – called “Hvedholm” and “Brahesminde” and belonging to Hvedholm Gods (Hvedholm Manor) – handled the crossing. The copyholders and their farmhands were in charge of the ferry operations to Fynshav. Back then, the small ferries moored at a pier at Dyndkrog (55° 05.989' N 010° 04.789' E) where the main road ended back then – it is located east of the current ferry berth, which was established in 1967.

Sailing further west past the current ferry berth along the coast, you will reach the jetty, which is called Bøjden Havn (Bøjden Harbour) among the locals (55° 06.402' N 010° 05.792' E). On the digital chart, however, it is marked as “Bro” (pier). The water depth is 2 metres by the jetty, but do be careful around it. The small harbour is absolutely worth a visit, if your boat is not too big. The harbour is not exactly luxurious, but it has a toilet and running water, and there is a grocery store at the nearby camping site. Right next to the jetty, there is a small beach, which is suitable for swimming.

Dyrborg and Ny Dyrborg (New Dyrborg)

Previously, it was quite common for the entire family to help out with the fishing. The men were at sea while the wives and children worked on land. In this photo, two children are preparing the nets for the next day's fishing.

Dyrborg (55° 04.288' N 010° 13.079' E) is an old fishing ground, however, only anglers and semi-commercial fishermen tend to fish here. A local saying goes like this: Dyrborg was built on herring. This originates in the period between 1880 and 1890 when the local fishermen experienced a full-blown success with regards to catching herring. It resulted in a lot of income and growth for the small community. 37 new houses were built and the population trebled.

In the late 19th century, owing to its wonderful location, Dyrborg became attractive for the citizens of Faaborg and other cities, who found it delightful as a rural getaway during the warm summer months. Thus, Dyrborg Sommerhotel (Dyrborg Summer Hotel) was established in the street called Fiskervænget in a 20-year-old grocery store, which had sadly been driven out of business by a recently opened co-operative store. An actor from Copenhagen designed the interior of the summer hotel, which opened in 1900. The hotel only had three rooms, so the management made an agreement with the local fishermen: families on vacation could rent the fishermen's houses, while they themselves moved into their outhouses. Catering would take place at the hotel, which soon expanded to contain a large dining hall seating almost one hundred people.

For this reason, Dyrborg became popular with Faaborg's many social circles when it was time to throw a party or arrange an outing to the countryside.

In 1903, the “Ellen” steam ship company was established, and its ferry – also called “Ellen” – navigated the new ferry route Faaborg -Dyreborg-Lyø-Avernakø-Søby, which existed until 1928. The summer hotel eventually changed its name to Dyreborg Kro (Dyreborg Inn) and was in operation until 1974.

Faaborg Harbour and Marina

The first shovelful of soil for the new public harbour bath in Faaborg was dug in April 2013. However, this new establishment was not the first of its kind in Faaborg; back in the year 1807, the city’s first harbour bath was inaugurated, and the new harbour bath finally opened in the summer of 2014. It was an immediate success, and the associated sea-kayaking centre proved to be a draw for both the local kayaking club and numerous visitors who have put the excellent facilities to good use. Photo: Anders Rehde Nielsen

When approaching Faaborg, it is impossible not to notice the yellow clock tower rising from the city’s highest point. It was built for the 13th century church, the city’s first, which was called Sct. Nikolaj Kirke (Church of St Nicholas). After the Reformation, the king donated the recently built monastic church – previously belonging to the Order of the Holy Ghost – to the Faaborg congregation. In return, the king took possession of the congregation’s old church and planned to use it as a granary. In actual fact, the church building was never used as such and was eventually torn down. The clock tower, however, remained standing. Among the reasons for this decision was the fact that it provided a great view of the surroundings as well as being an easily identifiable point of orientation from the sea. When sailing from Svendborg Strait, after passing Svelmø Trille (Svelmø Bar), you can aim for the clock tower and sail straight ahead from there – and you will only miss Grydeløbet (the Fairway) leading into Faaborg by a few metres.

Starting at Fyn, Katterød Rev (Katterød Reef) almost reaches out to the two green buoys marking Grydeløbet – in most places the reef is only a few centimetres below the surface at the usual tide, making it impossible to take that particular course towards Faaborg. Over the years, many a sailor has learnt this the hard way. And quite a few must have been taken by surprise when noticing an angler apparently standing directly in the water so far from the coast of Fyn, reeling in a sea trout or a garfish!

Opposite Faaborg Harbour is a shoal called Slettrøn (55° 05.413’ N 010° 13.970’ E), which is marked with a red buoy. This shoal, however, is not natural. According to tradition, it consists of the ballast that has been thrown overboard from various vessels. This explanation is quite probable, since at least two shipyards have been located in the current harbour, the first being Dyreborgs Værft (Dyreborg Shipyard), which was located in the western part of the harbour in the 19th century, and the second being the famous Møllers Værft (Møller’s Shipyard) which was in operation from 1868 until 1938, where a majority of Danish lightships was built. Among the ships originating here are a museum ship in Esbjerg Harbour, the lightship in Copenhagen’s Nyhavn (New Harbour) belonging to the Danish National Museum, and one in Christianshavns Kanal (Christianshavn’s Channel), also in Copenhagen. The two well-known veteran ships “Mira” and “Halmø” were also built at Møllers Værft. When one of the large wooden ships went ashore for reparations, the ballast had to be thrown off the ship, thereby creating Slettrøn, which you want to avoid because of the many boulders.

One of the characteristics of Faaborg Harbour is the harbour front, separated from the harbour by only an ordinary road. It is the back of the large merchant’s houses in the shape of a couple of warehouses and one backyard with a distinctive hexagonal garden pavilion. Ever since the merchant’s house on the street of Holkegade was built in the early 18th century, the latter has been used as a garden.

Knold, Drejet and Sinebjerg

1950s seaside life at Drejet near Knold. As can be seen in the photo, the beach huts being built here were hardly grandiose. The inconspicuous building on the right was most likely a primitive toilet without running water. The two other buildings served as a changing room and common room respectively, and also contained a primitive kitchen with a spluttering primus stove serving the baker and his small family from Faaborg. Photo: Private.

Going back to the early 20th century, the coast between Bøjden and Knold near Dyreborg has always been about summer holidays and leisure activities. Naturally, the oldest of the holiday cottages are located on rented land almost at the water’s edge at the very best beaches. The more recent summerhouse developments are located further inland because of legislation concerning protection of the coastal nature. In The South Fyn Archipelago, there are several similar areas from about the same period of time. Worth a visit in particular are the beach huts near Ærøskøbing towards Revkrogen (55° 00.417’ N 010° 20.822’ E) and the ones in Marstal on Eriks Hale (Erik’s Tail) south of the marina.

The first three or four beach huts – or summer cottages, if you will – that appear southwest of Knold when sailing westwards, are sheltered by the low cliff. One of them is particularly special, since it has been built on stilts, most likely due to the waves and high tide. An almost unbroken row of houses on Drejet follows next. Most of these houses were built in the mid-1930s on rented land. Today, the legal restrictions on the houses’ exterior and extensions are much stricter than it was back then, therefore allowing the area to maintain its original and distinctive character. Current Danish legislation ensures that modest beach huts are located where you would never be able to get permission to build anything new.

The beach huts were originally built by the Faaborg bourgeoisie who wanted to get away from the city to enjoy the sun and the beach. They rented the land from the local landowners. On some of the plots, a proper hut was never constructed; for some, a windbreak was enough to get the privacy they required.

If you follow the coast further westwards, you will arrive at yet another collection of beach huts located on the beach ridge with direct access to the water. This area is called Sinebjerg (55° 04.655’ N 010° 10.664’ E), originally consisting of a few fishing cottages from the 19th century.

The life in the two beach communities was quite posh and not that different from what happens when the elite of today goes on vacation.

Knastegrunden

Knastegrunden (55° 02.899’ N 010° 13.443’ E) is a shoal, which is located between the islands of Avernakø and Bjørnø. You have to keep some distance from it, so it is a good idea to keep an eye on the buoyage. At normal sea level, Knastegrunden is located only 60 centimetres below the surface. At low tide, the highest point of the shoal is visible, which is when you will be able to see that the tip of the shoal is a large rock, which will certainly stay put even if a large ship should strike it.

Several keels or hulls have scraped against this capricious rock, however, the most famous grounding took place on June 20th 1808, when an English battleship hit Knastegrunden and got stuck. This incidence was a part of the Napoleonic Wars; earlier that year, Spanish forces had been quartered on Fyn – some in Faaborg – in order to protect South Fyn and its surrounding islands. Spain was Denmark’s ally, and the Spanish forces sought to restrain English privateering in the area. In addition to the Spanish forces, Danish gunboats had been stationed at Svendborg, Faaborg and Assens. Two gunboats with Danish crews under the command of naval lieutenant Bruun were stationed at Faaborg. Moreover, an armed fieldwork had been established near Dyreborg in order to protect the entrance to Faaborg, and another one was located just east of Faaborg – the latter paid for by the influential merchant called Ploug.

Grydeløbet at Faaborg

When sailing towards Faaborg from the east and upon getting through the fairway known as Grydeløbet (55° 04.026' N 010° 16.782' E) – where it is highly recommended to keep within the two red and green buoys – you can sail straight ahead towards Faaborg Harbour. In peak season, the harbour will be crowded with various pleasure crafts hurrying to and from Faaborg. If you would like a more calm and peaceful trip to the harbour, it is a good idea to alter your course a little to starboard, thus getting closer to land and sailing along the coast towards Faaborg. The first houses to appear are private homes with attached beach lots, after which you will be able to see the Danland Faaborg hotel. Below the hotel is a public beach with bathing jetties and a diving platform. To the left of the beach is the Klinteparken park, where you will find the still active Helligkors Kilde (Wellspring of the Holy Cross). In the 16th and 17th centuries, there was a small chapel – probably operated by monks from the Order of the Holy Ghost monastery in Faaborg – next to the holy spring.

Lyø Trille (Lyø Bar) and Giesela

When sailing from the east – north around Lyø – you will inevitably pass Lyø Trille (Lyø Bar, 55° 03.614' N 010° 08.894' E), which is marked with a green buoy. This area, which is usually crowded by pleasure crafts bobbing about whilst anchored, is sheltered from the wind from all directions – except from the east. There is a large variety of birdlife at the island's spit, and there is a good chance of seeing a seal or two curiously seeing what the sailors are up to.

Amongst locals, the area west of the reef is called Nordre Brøndgrav (the Northern Trench, 55° 794' N 010° 08.199' E), because of the rapidly increasing water depth. This is a great spot for flatfish fishing. Off the coast of southern Lyø, you will find a similar area with much of the same characteristics – this area is simply called Brøndgraven (the Trench).

As the Lyø residents got out of bed on the morning of May 19th 1937, they saw the effects of Lyø Rev (Lyø Reef) not giving any shelter from eastern winds. "Giesela", a German hoy of 46 register tonnes, was grounded close to the beach. On the night of May 18th, a terrible snowstorm had raged across the Archipelago, causing many vessels to seek shelter between the islands. Giesela had followed suit with a cargo of 60 tonnes of pearl barley. Unfortunately, things did not quite go as planned, and the chain cable snapped. Later that morning, a couple of Lyø residents and the local landwaiter went out to the ship to help the grounded crew ashore. They were concerned that a fall in the water level would make the ship heel over. The crew landed safely ashore, and divers went to investigate whether raising the ship would be worth the trouble. In actual fact, the hoy was never raised, and the islanders eventually started to carve up the old ship, selling bits as scrap iron or using pieces of it for other purposes. Today, the ship appears to have gone, although there might still be a few parts hidden under the sand...

Bjørnø (Bear Island)



Hard Winters on Bjørnø

In the winter of 1978-1979, milk cans, both full and empty, as well as other necessities were pulled across the ice between Bjørnø and the slipway at the Sct. Hansgade street in Faaborg. The operation was carried out several times a day and required most of Bjørnø's male population to carry it out. Photo: Lars Skaaning

When sailing into Faaborg Fjord on a hot summer's day, it can be difficult to imagine the area being frozen over with cars driving on it, their trailers filled with pigs or children on their way to school or adults on their way to work in Faaborg – driving from Bjørnø to the mainland. But this has been the case during several hard winters. Sometimes the winter has been so harsh that keeping a fairway open between Faaborg Harbour and out through the opening between Bjørnø and Dyreborg has only been made possible by using the large ferries.

Nakkebølle Fjord and Fjællebroen



Nakkebølle Sanatorium, around 1920

Tuberculosis was treated by providing the patients with as much sun and fresh air as possible. Therefore, the sanatoriums of Denmark had large open-air shelters where bedridden patients were placed. The pompous large main building, which is visible from the sea, had long open-air shelters on each side. Photo: Faaborg Byhistoriske Arkiv

If you look directly towards the west, when sailing along the coast of Fyn from Svendborg Strait north of Skarø, you can get a glimpse of the island of Svømmø, which is attached to Fyn only by way of a road that can only be driven on when the tide is low. But before rounding Svømmø, you will reach Nakkebølle Fjord, which is the entrance to Fjællebroen Harbour (55° 03.547' N 010° 03.547' E). This area is absolutely worth a visit. The fairway leading to the harbour is quite narrow, but buoyed well. From the first red buoy at the entrance to the fjord, there is approximately one nautical mile to the harbour, which is 2.5 metres deep. In earlier times, the fjord went more than two kilometres inland towards the northwest from Fjællebroen – all the way to Nakkebølle Gods (Nakkebølle Manor), which is located by the highway between Faaborg and Svendborg. When the manor house was built back in the mid-16th century, it was reachable by boat. In the 300 years that followed, the innermost parts of the fjord became more and more choked, thus decreasing the depth of the water. It was therefore quite tempting for the tenant at the time to set up a dam in the right place, which he did in the years between 1866 and 1870. In the late 1980s, it was decided to abandon the reclamation process, and once again let the reclaimed land be filled with water – as was done in several similar places in Denmark – thus restoring the area to its original natural beauty. During the approach, it is worth observing the large white buildings located opposite the harbour in the western part of the fjord. They were originally erected in 1908 by the "National Association for the Fight Against Tuberculosis", however, the complex no longer serves as a sanatorium. Originally, Fjællebroen was an entrepot, but in the second half of the 19th century, the place had an actual shipyard, which was

operated by a boat builder named Hoffmann. He mostly built merchant ships until he went out of business in the early 20th century. In the decades to follow, the shipbuilding itself stagnated, until 1940-1941, when a boat builder named Carl Banke pulled a barge into the fjord – loaded with everything needed to establish a small shipyard including an office. Today, this building has been reconstructed at the Smakkecenter (Smack Centre) on Strynø where it actually still serves as a shipyard.

Skrams Flak (Skram's Flats)

Skrams Flak (55° 01.614' N 010° 11.575' E) is located a little to the south of the midpoint between Lyø and Avernakø. It is named after Peder Skram – an admiral in the Danish Fleet from 1535 to 1555. During the Count's Feud in the mid-1530s, and in connection with the Battle of Øksnebjerg on June 11th 1535, where Johan Rantzau defeated the count's forces, Faaborg – among other towns – was occupied by the forces of King Christian III.

After the battle, four ships from Lübeck pillaged the islands south of Faaborg, but Peder Skram's ships were sailing southwards through Lillebælt (The Little Belt Strait) at the same time and proceeded to sink the four Lübeckian ships near Bjørnø. The exact place is not known, but according to several sources, Skram's fleet was supposed to have been stationed near Skram's Flak before sailing towards Svendborg Strait, where it fought a winning battle against the Lübeckian fleet (for further information, see the chart stories about Svendborg Strait).

Lyø



Lyø Harbour in 2014 – the boats crowd Lyø Harbour during peak season. Moreover, quite a few larger ships (as shown on the photo), mainly from the Netherlands, bring tourists and school children to The South Fyn Archipelago. Photo: Anders Rehde Nielsen

Lyø is definitely worth a visit – whether you are sailing your own boat or using the local ferry service between Faaborg, Lyø and Avernakø. Recently, the old harbour on the island of Lyø (50° 03,1' N 10° 09,6' E) was extended with another basin allowing more than twice the amount of boats to moor as before. In the peak-season, it is highly recommended to approach the harbour relatively early in the afternoon if you want to be certain of getting a berth. If you fail in doing so, you can cast anchor at Lyø Trille (Lyø Bar) or west of the harbour, both providing shelter for southern and western winds.

In Lyø Town, located in the middle of the island, the many half-timbered houses are huddled together creating a unique village environment. The round cemetery circumvents the church, which was built in 1645. When arriving at the peaceful island, it is difficult to imagine that on May 6th 1223, one of the most important events in Danish history took place right here!

Valdemar the Victorious had gone hunting on Lyø with his son, Valdemar the Young, when the forces of Henry of Schwerin captured them. Both Valdemars were taken to the castle in Schwerin, where they were to endure three years' imprisonment before being released.

The capture had huge international ramifications, ending in Valdemar the Victorious' "Baltic Empire" falling apart, and large parts of it being annexed by the German Empire.

Skjoldnæs

On the western tip of Ærø, Skjoldnæs marks the border between Lillebælt and The South Fyn Archipelago. If you are near Skjoldnæs, you are either approaching the Archipelago or leaving it. If you want to go ashore here, the area called Næbbet is a good place to cast anchor as it offers good water depth close to the shore. From here, you can walk up to Skjoldnæs Fyr (Skjoldnæs Lighthouse), which is accessible for the public. The lighthouse is 22 metres high and is visible at a distance of 20 nautical miles. It was built in 1881 out of Svaneke granite, following plans made by a Swedish architect named Wedén.

From within the lighthouse you will find a magnificent view of the sea. If you look to the southeast from here, you will see the many fences traversing the landscape. The farms in the village of Haven each used to have their own row of soil – a remnant from the time of the co-operatives, where all citizens got an equal portion of soil of equal quality. Today, several fences have been removed, and where the cattle used to graze, you now see golfers swinging their clubs on the golf course.

Næbbet is located where a western and an eastern current meet, and these opposing currents have created a spit. Geologists call this phenomenon – which is also found at Thurø Rev (Thurø Reef) and the island of Anholt – an angular foreland. In the sea off the coast of Næbbet are sub-marine settlements from the Mesolithic era. On Næbbet, you will also find the remains of an old fieldwork, which is in the process of eroding. The small lakes on Næbbet emerged through the excavation of pebble gravel. Today, the lakes and their surroundings serve as a breeding and resting area for the arctic tern, the redshank, the plover, the oystercatcher and the coot.

For the islanders, Skjoldnæs Fyr serves the same purpose as Kronborg does on Sjælland – when you reach Skjoldnæs on the starboard side, home is not far away.

Svelmø and Hansebugten (Hanse Bay)

When approaching Svelmø from the east or the west, its northern end appears to be attached to Fyn. That, however, is not the case. If you want to access Svelmø from Fyn, you have to wade just under 400 metres with water up to your knees – and this is at normal water level. Firstly, you reach Lille Svelmø (Little Svelmø), which at its highest point only reaches a couple of metres above normal water level. Due to shoaling within the last few decades, Lille Svelmø has become attached to the islet called Græsholm.

Lille Svelmø is connected to Svelmø by land. At the southern end of Svelmø, where the highest point is 15 metres above sea level, a long sand bar called Svelmø Trille (Svelmø Bar) reaches far out from the coast. For the many touring kayaks, this is a favourite place to pull up. The sand bar is marked with a red buoy (55° 01.957' N 010° 19.526' Ø), which is highly recommended to comply with, even though you might feel tempted to cut a few metres on the inside before shaping your course towards Faaborg or Svendborg. When rounding the bar, the many birds that rest there appear to almost walk directly on the surface of the water. That is because the settled gravel only reaches a few centimetres above sea level in most places.

Svelmø was first inhabited and cultivated in the 17th century. Originally, the island only had one farm, but in the 18th century, it

was split up into two so-called “twin farms”. This was done by building three stone walls splitting the island from north to south into four equally large parts, and one stone wall was built directly through the courtyard splitting the large farm building in two. Twin farms are a familiar sight on several of the islands in The South Fyn Archipelago, including Bjørnø and Illum in Helnæsbugten (Helnæs Bay). The two farms remained split until they burnt down in 1976. After the fire, a couple of new houses were built. These are not used for permanent residence, but are rented out as holiday homes. An info board has been put up stating the rules of behaviour in the area, which is open to the public. After rounding Svelmø Trille and sailing towards Faaborg, you enter Hansebugt (Hanse Bay), which extends all the way to Katterød Rev (Katterød Reef) and Grydeløbet. This maritime place name probably originates in the Hanseatic period when even the larger merchant ships of the Hanseatic League were able to sail close to the coast due to the rapidly increasing water depth. Revkrogen and Korshavn
Korshavn is a peaceful place – you can easily spend a couple of hours sitting on the bench below the large tree by the harbour watching the world sail by. Photo: Anders Rehde Nielsen

Revkrogen (55° 00.483'N 10° 20.970'E) is a safe natural harbour located in the eastern part of Avernakø, sheltering from southern, western and north-western winds. Even at the beach, the water is fairly deep. At the northern end of Revkrogen, you will find a small private harbour, which belongs to a mansion popularly known as “Mærsk-Møller’s house”, which is used as a summer residence by a branch of the famous shipping family. The house was originally built to be a summer hotel – and it did serve as that in the early 20th century.

When sailing from Revkrogen, following the northern coast of Avernakø, you will eventually reach Korshavn. Avernakø consists of two adjoining islands. Previously, the islands were connected only by an isthmus, which in stormy weather was extremely dangerous to traverse. The current road has stone kerbs and was established in 1937.

Korshavn (55° 00.819'N 10° 19.010'E) is a calm harbour and a great place to moor for the night. Berths are present on both sides of the jetty, which is well protected from even the strongest winds. The small harbour has fewer facilities than some of the large marinas, however, there is a toilet, running water and electricity. For some, the lack of facilities constitutes a problem, but for others, it is a great relief. Since the water depth in the largest berths does not exceed two metres, there is a limit to the size of vessels able to berth here. So, if you are looking for peace and quiet and a safe place for small children to swim and catch crabs, Korshavn is definitely the place to be.

In Avernakø’s other end, towards the west, you will find Avernakø Bådehavn (Avernakø Marina, 55° 02.414'N 10° 15.487'E), which was recently extended to provide more berths and all the facilities of a modern marina. For very good reasons, the harbour is popular in the peak season.

Shoals and Anchorages in the West

Drejø Gammelhavn (Drejø Old Harbour) can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century, and until the ferry pier on the northern side of Drejø was established, it was the island’s primary pier. The merchants Baagø & Riber from Svendborg established a warehouse for the first packet boats – today, you can enjoy a beer in Peter’s shed.

On the whole, the waters west of the Mørkedybet channel is “clean” – meaning there are no shoals – and can thus be navigated by pleasure crafts without difficulty. For the purposes of commercial shipping, however, Mads Jensens Grund (Mads Jensen’s Shoal) and Skarsand near Drejø and Billes Grunde (Bille’s Shoals) between the islands of Avernakø and Vesterø are

marked with buoys. The latter consists of three shoals with a water depth of at least 4 metres, which do not pose any problems for boats, and one which is 3.4 metres deep. Only the latter, which is located furthest to the south, is buoyed. There is some disagreement about the identity of the “Bille” after whom the shoals are named. Presumably, the name refers to Commander Steen Bille who was in charge of Copenhagen’s naval defence during the Bombardment in 1807.

After losing the fleet, Steen Bille organised the gunboat war against the English fleet forcing it to invest many resources in the Danish waters to ensure the passage to and from the Baltic Sea. Skovens Vig (The Forest’s Cove) is a good anchorage for western, northern and eastern winds. It has a sandy bottom and there is a lovely view towards Ærø to the south. The island of Drejø is named after Drejet, which is a narrow sand spit. The spit connects Drejø with Skoven (The Forest), which is a fairly high-rising moraine hill island with cliffs on its western side. The name of this island is, of course, derived from the fact that it used to be forest-clad – as were most of the islands in The South Fyn Archipelago in the Middle Ages. The island has three farms and some houses. The low tidal meadow called Mejlholm is an important breeding area for many birds – and so are the areas called Høllehoved and Nørresø. 60 different bird species breed on Drejø.

The Sea Between Ærø, Drejø and Avernakø

After you have passed by the western fairway buoy in the Mørkedybet channel, the sea opens up for beating up against the wind, which often comes in from the west. One of the best things about going sailing in the protected Archipelago is the fact that you make landfall almost constantly – provided that visibility is at least fairly good. From Egholm Flak (Egholm Flats), you may choose to head for Drejø, where you can put into port or continue sailing in the Højesteneløbet channel towards Svendborgsund (Svendborg Strait). Or you can sail southwards and put into port in either Ærøskøbing or the natural harbour of Kleven.

One final option is to continue westwards and choose Søby Havn (Søby Harbour) or sail past Skjoldnæs Fyr (Skjoldnæs Lighthouse) before continuing on to Lillebælt (Little Belt Strait) and then going either northwards or southwards. The many options regarding harbours and anchorages also mean that you can get out of the way in a hurry if the weather starts turning bad. Even though the Archipelago is protected, the seas are short and fiery – causing what is called a choppy sea – and occasionally, the current in the channels runs fast – sometimes at speeds of a couple of knots – which is more than enough to make the journey rough, particularly if you are in a small boat with scant motor power. Back when sailing always involved sails and oars, a heavy squall might have had terrible consequences.

According to tradition, such an incidence happened back in 1532 when inhabitants of Drejø were in their boats on their way to a christening in Ærøskøbing. They were surprised by a storm, and many drowned, including the child and its parents. This tragic accident convinced the inhabitants of Drejø to build their own church, which was inaugurated in 1535 – one year prior to the Reformation. The new parish included the islands of Birkholm, Hjortø, Hjelmsbøved and Skarø. The church’s location outside the village in a low area in the south of the island has had historians scratching their heads – but take a look at the chart, and the reason will be clear to you. Just south of the church, the line of depths take a turn close to the shore enabling the dinghies from the neighbouring islands of the parish to easily go ashore here – the place is probably the island’s oldest pier and harbour.

Hjortø

Hjortø is the smallest of the trio of islands consisting of itself, Drejø and Tåsinge, and is rather flat – its highest point only reaches five metres. The island is circumvented by dykes, and in some places, old agricultural machines have been used as filling. During the storm surge of 1872, only one tenth of the island was

above water, and the satellite island of Hjelmshoved was totally covered by the flood.



The ferry called HJORTØBOEN has operated between Svendborg and Hjortø since 1976.

One of the gems of the Archipelago is the old Hjortø mail boat. With its characteristic hot-bulb engine from the Hundested engine plant, the boat delivered the mail to Hjortø from 1954 to 1976. Until 1969, the mail boat sailed alongside the Ærø ferry in the Højsteneløbet channel unloaded its passengers, brought new ones aboard plus the mail, and then sailed back. Several leisure sailors refrain from navigating Hjortø because of the depth. However, the conditions of the sea bed create a funnel leading to the dug-out fairway, which is one and a half metres deep and leads to the harbour – so, if you are careful, navigating Hjortø is definitely possible.

Søby Havn (Søby Harbour)



A large sailing ship – the German barque called THOR HEYERDAL, lies at anchor north of Ærø. Drejø can be glimpsed in the background. Photo: Ole Mortensøn

After having sailed just under five nautical miles along the coast of Ærø from Revkrog or Urehoved, you will reach the harbour of Søby, a city that is characterised by its fishing, its ferry and its shipyard. The harbour faces north, and the first thing you notice from the sea is the silo by the harbour, and then the ships under repair at the shipyard. It is one of the largest remaining shipyards in Denmark, and its docks and cranes dominate the northern part of the harbour, whereas the southern part is reserved for fishing vessels and the ferry.

Pleasure crafts must put into the new harbour east of the ferry port. The service between Søby and Faaborg has been in operation for a long time, while the service between Søby and Fynshav on Als has been added more recently. Actually, the ferry service to Als was in place prior to the year of 1864, but it was closed down because of the war with Germany and the subsequent loss of Southern Jylland. Søby is the largest fishing port on Ærø. Over a number of years, a number of trawlers from Søby fished all over Denmark. Today, however, the port is dominated by small dinghies using fishing nets.

Skarø

Bathing guests at Skarø in 1908. Tourism in the Archipelago had its basis in the seaside hotels, but tourists also visited the islands in search of the idyllic nature. Drejø got a seaside hotel in 1927. The small island of Skarø is located northeast of Drejø. To the east, the island is bordered by the channel called Knudedyb, and to the west, by the Højsteneløbet channel. Despite its modest size, Skarø has a pier on every side. “The Dead Man’s Pier” – also known as Kreuers Bro (Kreuers Pier) – from where the inhabitants of Skarø transported their dead to the church on Drejø, was located on the west coast of the island. The highest point on the island is Vesterbjerg (Western Mountain), which at nine metres above sea level definitely deserves its name. Skarø’s name possibly derives from the island’s low cliffs, called “skar” in Danish. Skarø Odde (Skarø Spit) and Skarø Rev (Skarø Reef) reaches out towards Fyn, and the curving spit demands full attention from sailors, as it is constantly changing.

The ferry service to Svendborg takes 30 minutes, which is short enough for Skarø residents to commute to work in Svendborg. As a consequence hereof, the island has not experienced depopulation to the same extent as some of the other islands in the Archipelago. Only thirty souls makes up the small Skarø community, and fights within the community are not uncommon.

Drejø

Drejø Teglværk (Drejø Tileworks) as seen from its own pier. In 1899, the owner, Morten Hansen from Klintegården, bought a used tile factory from the Tisselholt manor on Fyn and reconstructed it on the western cliff of Skoven (The Forest). In 1917, the tileworks was sold to Stenstrup Teglværk (Stenstrup Tileworks), who wanted to avoid the competition and eventually decided to tear it down.

The primary route to Drejø is through the Højsteneløbet channel, which separates Drejø and Hjortø. A fairway has been dug out in the channel, which is used by the ferry operating between Ærø and Svendborg. The twin buoys at the mouth of the channel are known among the locals as Hans and Rasmus – two brothers who worked at Svendborg Harbour.

When the ferry service began, liaisons with the surrounding world became more common. In the evening, when the steam ship arrived, Drejø’s youth got together at the ferry pier to receive and ask for news, a custom, which was upheld well into the 1960s. The first ferry put into Gammelhavn (Old Harbour) in the north of Drejø in 1883. Gammelhavn is a small, well-preserved harbour, which dates far back, and whose well-preserved coastal environment still has its old sheds, slipway, drying ground and fishing houses. The modern ferry pier on the south of the island is newer, dating from 1905. The main island of Drejø was the centre of Drejø Municipality and parish. Drejø consists of the large main island – where you will also find Drejø Town – and the smaller, but more hilly Skoven (The Forest). The two islands are connected by a low isthmus called Drejet, which has lent its name to the island.

Back in 1921, Drejø had 298 inhabitants, but today, only 60 people live here. On the north side of Drejø, near Høllehoved, several

seaweed walls have been preserved – they were used to reclaim land.

On Drejød Kirke (Drejød Church), there is a flood level mark from 1872 showing the high water level. However, occasionally, the change in water level goes in the opposite direction. After the storm of 1999, the water level around Drejød was extremely low – in fact, Gunnar Eriksen from the farm called Kildager was able to walk to the islet of Grydholm north of the entrance to Gammelhavn, and in the low water, he found a previously undiscovered Stone Age settlement.

Ærøskøbing and Møllegabet

The channel between Dejød and Bjerget (The Mountain) on Urehoved. When sailing, you have to follow the buoying carefully during the approach because of the large rocks located in the sea off Bjerget. Despite its name, Bjerget is just a couple of small hills, and a small wild life preserve is located to the south of them. On the isthmus is a row of small colourful beach huts, which used to belong to the people of Ærøskøbing, as they were located near their favourite beach in Revkrog close to the city.

Whilst entering, you will sail past the island of Dejød on the port side. The hilly island that reaches up to six metres is uninhabited and unspoiled by man – in fact no one has ever lived here, and no plough has ever turned the soil. Having said that, the island has always been used by grazing cattle, and this is immediately apparent when looking at the landscape as only hawthorn bushes and some trees have managed to survive. In the 1970s, underwater archaeologists from the Museum of Langeland examined a very well preserved settlement from the Mesolithic era off the coast of Dejød. Back then, the island was larger, and the Stone Age community lived on the beach where the fish were aplenty.

The old Ærøskøbing harbour is a gem, and so is the city itself. The connected harbour and city environment is as well preserved as just a few other places in Denmark. For centuries the pier was the city's only harbour, as was the case in many other old harbours in Denmark. In each of the old market towns by the sea, the street called Brogade or Skibbrogade (Pier Street) led to the harbour. In the 1800s, the first harbour basins were established, and Ærøskøbing Harbour is actually such an old harbour basin. The harbour also boasts a shipyard, which is currently restoring old steel ships. The old shipyard serves as a social initiative by employing troubled young people. The three-masted schooner from 1922 called "Fylla", which currently serves as a ship for school outings, is based in the old shipyard. One of the most peculiar things on the harbour front is the small, whitewashed house located in the south-eastern corner of the harbour. This is the harbour's cooking house. In the era of sailing ships, it was forbidden to use fire on board, and therefore, the chef had to go ashore to cook dinner in the cooking house.

Kleven



The view of the Archipelago from Ærø on a summer's day towards Lilleø and Ommelshoved. Photo: Ole Mortensen

Instead of using the Møllegabet channel to get to Ærøskøbing Harbour, you can sail eastwards around Dejød, passing Ommelshoved Flak (Ommelshoved Flats) on the port side. The old marks for approach were used up until the 1970s and were tough to follow.

Today, however, without much difficulty but with glimpses on the chart plotter, sailors are able to put into port here. Pleasure crafts often put into the port of Kleven, which is a magnificent protected natural harbour with good options for anchorage. An old pier is located innermost in Kleven. Before getting there, you need to steer clear of several large rocks. In the era of sailing ships, Kleven was used for laying up schooners, galleasses and cutters for the winter. Ommel used to be a skipper's town, and at its busiest, around 50 freight ships were based in Ommel and the neighbouring village of Kraghnæs. The water depth reaches two metres at the end of the old pier. From the pier, the road leads into the skipper's town, which much like the towns of Dragør on the island of Amager and Sønderho on the island of Fanø has a shambles of winding streets and lanes, where visitors may easily get lost. The town remains idyllic, and the local residents take good care of the harbour front and the pier, which has now been furnished with toilets and baths.

The southern part of the bay separating Ærøskøbing and Kleven is very shallow. Below the high country at Nevre is the island of Lilleø. This small and low island was once inhabited, and the soil was cultivated, however, the last residents left the island for good in 1898. Today, the island is grazed by sheep, and the island's other inhabitants are herring gulls and arctic terns. Nørreholm, near the village of Kraghnæs, is another grassy islet. Today, there is no foreland at Kraghnæs, but there used to be, when Gråsten Nor (Gråsten Cove) cut deep inland, almost splitting Ærø in two. The waters were excellent for fishing, and a small ferry sailed across the cove, thus shortening the journey between "the two Ærø's". In 1856, Gråsten Nor was dyked and drained. The indented nature of Ærø's coastline was even more pronounced before Gråsten Nor, Vitsø Nor, Stokkeby Nor, etc. were dyked – and this characteristic feature is thought to be the origin of the island's name. Linguists have interpreted Ærø (or Erre) as meaning "the winding".

Revkrog

Following the coast of Ærø westwards from the sea buoy at Ærøskøbing, rounding Urehoved, a bay appears to the south. This bay is called Revkrog. Even close to the shore, the water is deep, and throughout the ages, the bay has been used for safe anchorage, unless the wind came in strong from the northwest. If you have a dinghy, you can land on the beach, and from there, Ærøskøbing is only one kilometre away.

Near the village of Borgnæs, the highway follows the beach, and here used to be a small entrepot, a windmill and Ærø's only water mill. Of the latter, the stately main building and the millpond have been preserved.

Between the villages of Brejninge and Skovby, the ground is high and slopes down towards the coast. The highest point of Ærø, Synneshøj, which reaches 67 metres above sea level, is located in this area. The voyage along the high coast is very striking.

Marstal Harbour and Roadstead



Marstal Harbour as seen from its entrance. The stone pier measures approximately 1 kilometre and protects the harbour to the east. Photo: Ole Mortensen

Putting into Marstal Harbour is definitely worth it. In the summer, pleasure crafts crowd the long harbour basin. The town's many ships have always been laid up in the harbour. Even though the fleet of sailing ships, and more recently, the fleet of motor ships, have disappeared, and the ferry service has ceased to operate, there is always something interesting to see. Two locally built ships are stationed in the harbour as concrete evidence of the town's shipping history. "Samka", a motor freighter from 1956, and the newly restored schooner "Bonavista" are both stationed at Eriksens Plads (Eriksen's Place). The latter is open for the public; however, the ship lacks rigging, motor, and equipment, and is therefore no longer able to sail. Eriksens Plads with its shipyard belongs to Marstal Søfartsmuseum (Marstal Shipping Museum). Visitors can see the different vessels currently being restored and observe and listen to the hot-bulb engines, which are started at regular intervals. At its peak, Marstal Harbour could boast no fewer than eight shipyards. The floating dock attracts attention and indicates that the harbour is indeed still very active. For those who arrive aboard their own boat, a visit to Marstal Søfartsmuseum is an absolute must, as it holds one of Denmark's best shipping-themed collections.

If you are leaving Marstal Harbour to the north, sailing further into the Archipelago, the voyage is through Nordre Løb (Northern Fairway), which is well buoyed. The course is due north, until you reach the northern approach to Marstal, where the fairway turns at an angle of 90 degrees, leading to another fairway. On the starboard side, to the south, you will find sandy islets. The fairway, which is 3.8 metres deep, passes by Mandens Grund (The Man's Shoal) to the south and Meyers Grund (Meyer's Shoal) and Venegrund to the north (54,53,00 N; 10,34,00 Ø). Johan Anton Meyer was a commander of the Danish navy, and in the 1820s and 1830s, he was in charge of the measurement of the shoals in both The South Fyn Archipelago and The Smålandsfarvandet between Lolland, Falster and Sjælland. When sailing past the sea buoy, you will find yourself in the waters known as Bredningen.

Instead of following the buoyed route, you are able to continue northwards without difficulty, to the entrance to the Mørkedybet channel. An alternative route could be towards the small, oblong island of Halmø, which is a great place to cast anchor for lunch. The sea to the west of Halmø is called Halmø Sund (Halmø Strait), however, only kayaks and barges are able to sail between Ommelshoved and Halmø. Halmø is a moraine hill, which reaches its highest point in the north, where the cliff called Halmø Gavl (Halmø Gable) is located. To the west, the island is low and consists of tidal meadows. Sand martins breed on the moraine cliff, and the tidal meadows are colonised by herring gulls and common gulls.

Klørðybet and The Islets



The southern entrance to Marstal is called Klørðybet. A dutch steel schooner lies at anchor by the channel. Photo: Ole Mortensen

It is important to find the fairway buoys to Klørðybet, for if you sail past, you will hit a shoal that is only 60 centimetres deep. A belt of sand bars stretches from Ristinge Hale (Ristinge Tail) on Langeland to Langholm, and through the years many a ship has run aground here.

Klørðybet (54°50'36.68"N; 10°32'53.02" Ø) is a natural channel, which has been straightened out and deepened over time. Klørðybet started curving more and more to the east, and in 1990, a new fairway was dug, and the excavated material was put in Klørðybet. The new fairway is five metres deep, but occasionally, it gets sanded up. It is very important to keep within the buoys, as the water depth outside the fairway is less than one metre in some places. On the starboard side, you will find the low islets of Langholm, Langholmshoved and Lindholm, which are inhabited by gulls and wading birds.

The spit called Eriks Hale (Erik's Tail) appears on the port side – it was created by material from the disintegration of the long, southern coast of Ærø. A row of old beach huts is located at the inside of the tail. After the entrance, the water shoals. Hestegrunden (The horse's shoal) is located on the port side, opposite Marstal town – the origin of the name is unknown, however, Marstal's most impressive structure is located here: a stone pier, approximately 1 kilometre in length, protecting the harbour against eastern storms and ice drifts in the winter. The natural channel of Klørðybet continues northwards with Hvinegrund on the port side and Hoffens Grund on the starboard side, before reaching a dead end at Hovvig Grund. The sailor, however, naturally follows the buoying further inwards to Marstal Harbour via a dug fairway through the sand bar called Søndre Løb (Southern Channel) – and previously called Laaen.

Bredningen



Bredningen is busy in the summer. In the photo is a fine, old schooner called JOHANNE af Nakskov, which is on its way to Marstal. Photo: Ole Mortensen

Although the sea between Ærø, Strynø and Langeland has no name on chart 170, it is known as Bredningen to the locals. To the south, Bredningen is bordered by the islets between Langeland and Ærø, and to the north by Rudkøbing Løb (Rudkøbing Channel) and Tåsinge Grunde (Tåsinge Shoals). The water depth in Bredningen reaches five to six metres – which is quite vast for the Archipelago – meaning that sailing does not pose any problems, whether it concerns ferries or keeled pleasure crafts. The ferry service between Rudkøbing and Marstal ceased to operate on January 20th 2013. After the last Ice Age and during the Stone Age, Bredningen was a fresh water lake surrounded by oak forests. The forest stood on the shallow areas, and the remains of it are still standing on the bottom of Bredningen.

The biggest harbour in the Bredningen Sea is Grevebroen (The Count's Pier) on Strynø, a low moraine hill of around 500 hectares. The fertile island has been cultivated and inhabited ever since the Middle Ages. The islanders had to cross the sea to get anywhere; the neighbouring market towns of Rudkøbing and Marstal were particularly popular destinations. The island lacked a harbour for larger vessels to load and unload, and in 1867 the first pier was built. It was called Grevebroen, because the county of Langeland, to which the island belonged at the time, paid for the construction. In 1954, a ferry berth was added, meaning that the motor ships of Det Sydfyenske Dampskibsselskab (The South Fyn Steam Ship Company) were able to bring automobiles with them. In the 1990s, Grevebroen was in a state of decay, but the harbour was renovated and extended in 2008, enabling it to satisfy the demands of the ferry service and the visiting boats. A new ferry has been purchased, and new ferry berths were built in the summer of 2013.

In the summertime, Bredningen is filled with pleasure crafts – mostly, of course, in the peak season of July and August, and on some days, hundreds of boats can sail through. On days with calm sea, you may meet Denmark's small whale: the porpoise. The porpoises typically swim in pods – small groups – and can be observed when they come up for air and their dorsal fins break the surface. In spring and autumn, brentgeese and eiders can be observed on the sea, whilst the cormorant can be observed all year round as it searches for food – if you're lucky, you can sometimes catch them sitting on poles or rocks drying their wings.

The Shoal Between Birkholm and Strynø



Sea wormwood has spread over a large part of Bredholm. The sheep avoid the wormwood when grazing the island. Photo: Ole Mortensen

West of Strynø is a large unnamed shoal with a series of islets all part of Strynø. The area is not navigated, as it now serves as a wild life preserve. Previously, the navigation of the area was limited to

barges sailing out to the islets to harvest hay and, later on in the year, to release cattle or sheep to graze in the summer. The cattle had to be sailed out – if you have them swim out to the islets, they might swim off again of their own accord.

The islets of Bredholm, Grensholm, Græsholm and Buddiken constitute one cadastral plot, and since 1887, an association has maintained the grazing of the islets. Most of the farms on Strynø own a share of Bredholm. The Bredholm association still exists and is now subsidised, and the islet is pastured for the sake of the environment – and particularly for the breeding birds.

Many migrating birds visit the Archipelagos wild life preserve on their way from Scandinavia, including the barnacle goose and the brentgoose. In the winter, huge flocks of tufted ducks and coots gather here. The common tern, black-headed gull, common gull, gadwall and greylag goose all breed here. The grass on the islets is important to the geese that migrate to and from the Russian tundra. Contrary to the islets, Strynø Kalv (Strynø Calf) was cultivated. There were three small farms in the middle of the island, and originally, the island was farmed according to the three-field system. The low island is surrounded by dykes and outside of these are tidal meadows. The last islanders left for good in 1969, and since then, the buildings have been used for holidaying and the fields for pasturing sheep. The narrow strait between Strynø Kalv and Møllebroen on Strynø is navigated by boats and barges – one of Strynø Kalv's old barges has been preserved and is currently being used by the Smakkecenter (The Smack Centre) for school trips around the Archipelago and for seal safaris. Another vessel belonging to the Smakkecenter that is of great importance to the pasturing of the islets in the Archipelago is the newly built steel barge called "Yrsa" which has the capacity to release or collect large herds of sheep or heifers from all around the Archipelago.

Mørkedybet



*In tow in the Mørkedybet channel towards the islet of Birkholm.
Photo: Ole Mortensen*

The natural channel leading westwards from Marstal is called Mørkedybet (The Dark Abyss). At the end of the Ice Age, it was a glacial stream. The buoys and beacons are close to each other. On the port side is Skaaen, which can be navigated and is used by the local population to cut off the eastern part of the buoyed channel. In the summer, the narrow channel is very busy, and you will encounter many different boats. On the starboard side, the water is not as deep, and you will pass Grensholm, Bredholm – with sheep grazing – and the two low islets of Buddiken and Græsholm, before reaching Birkholm on the starboard side and Store Egholm (Large Egholm) on the port side after sailing for about 1.5 nautical miles.

Birkholm has a small harbour, from where the mail boat sails to Marstal also carrying passengers. Less than ten people live on Birkholm, compared to 89 people in 1870. It is the lowest of the inhabited islands in The South Fyn Archipelago, and is circumvented by dykes. The island's highest point is located to the west and is called Hyllens Bakke (Hyllens Hill) – it reaches a mere 2.5 metres in height. The houses and the few farms are bunched in the middle of the island and constitute a diminutive village. Since the 1990's, there has been no farming on Birkholm, however, some farmers from "Taasinge og Fyns Kolaug" (The Cow Guild of Tåsinge and Fyn) have leased the farmland for their cattle to graze. Throughout the summer, the small harbour is brimming with visiting boats. If you want to avoid the chaos, you can cast anchor off the little beach just north of the harbour. The island only has gravel roads and therefore no car traffic, so visitors can walk around in peace and quiet. The tidal meadows and channels on Birkholm are home to a diverse range of animal life. A lot of different bird species breed on the island, and the fire-bellied toad has once again settled here after having been recently released in the water meadows. You can hear the toad's beautiful, bell-like call in May.

The low, uninhabited islets called Lille Egholm (Small Egholm) and Store Egholm (Large Egholm) are located opposite Birkholm. Don't forget that it is not permitted to go ashore on the islets between March 1st and July 15th due to the breeding season. Vårø Knude (Vårø Hill) and Monnet Vårø Knude (Vårø Hill) is the southernmost point in Tåsinge. The hill can be seen from far and wide and takes its name from the village of Vårø, which is located a little further inland. From the coast of Vårø, it takes almost three kilometres before the water gets deep, meaning that only flat-bottomed vessels are able to navigate the harbour.

Vårø Knude is connected to Tåsinge by Monnet Strandeng (Monnet Tidal Meadow). The majority of Monnet only reaches one metre above sea level, and has never been cultivated. As a consequence hereof, the bird life is very rich and diverse.

Tåsinge Grund (Tåsinge Shoal)

A large shallow area called Tåsinge Grund (Tåsinge Shoal) is located west of Rudkøbing Løb (Rudkøbing Channel) and south of Tåsinge. The occasional large rock may appear in the area, in which the water depth is generally around 30 centimetres. It is not the best place for keelboats, but if you manage to stay clear of Tåsinge Grund, it is possible to sail westwards on one. You just have to keep your distance to the northern coast of Strynø and make for the northern point of the small island of Vogterholm, before shaping your course westwards in between Hjortø and Birkholm.

In the summertime, Tåsinge Grund can only be navigated by smaller boats and barges from Stjoul on Tåsinge to fish or sight-see. Other visitors to the shoal are kayakers who row out into the Archipelago in small groups. In 1996, the area between Tåsinge, Strynø and Birkholm became a bird protection area under the Ramsar Convention, making all hunting and wind surfing prohibited. Late in the summer, thousands of mute swans gather here to moult their flight feathers.

Stjoul

The waters around Monnet are great for fishing. Actually, the locals used to call the bay between Vårø Knude (Vårø Hill) and Stjoul Knude (Stjoul Hill) "the pantry", because of the rich bird and fish life being a regular buffet. Until recently, sheep grazed on the high island of Store Rallen (Large Rallen), but these days it remains un-grazed.

Navigating the waters requires local knowledge because of the low water depth. The shallow areas south of Tåsinge are filled with large rocks, which may well be visible at low tide, but can otherwise be dangerously hidden below the surface.

Lindelse Nor (Lindelse Cove)



On a hot summer's day, a number of smacks as well as a Viking ship from Strynø called at Lindelse Nor (Lindelse Cove). Smakkecenteret (The Smack Centre) had visitors from the North, who wanted to see a bit of Langeland. Photo: Ole Mortensen

Lindelse Nor cuts deep into the west coast of Langeland, and with a little care, the cove can be navigated by vessels with a draught of one and a half metres. In some areas, the cove is very shallow, and there is also a reef around Flintholm. The stone and sand shoals make the entrance difficult, and you have to take a bearing at the church spire in Fuglsbølle in line with Højeklint (High Cliff). There are five small islands and three islets in the cove. The two largest islands, Langø and Lindø, are connected to Langeland by dams. The island called Kværnen is around one hectare large, but reaches 11 metres in height and is shaped like a saddle. Eskilsø, on the other hand, is rather low and grassy. Bukø is the outermost of the islands in the cove and consists of a moraine hill nine metres in height, on which a few trees grow, surrounded by a sandy beach. Bukø has never been cultivated, but cattle and sheep have grazed here, as is the case for Kværnen and Eskilsø.

The cove has been explored since the Middle Ages. This was discovered when excavating the site called Købingshoved, a castle mound located on a small isthmus a little north of Kværnen. As its name reveals, Købingshoved was a "købing" – a small trading post that dates back to the early 14th century. It was well-protected in the bottom of the cove, and its complicated navigation protected it against attacks from the sea. The trading post, however, never became a true competitor to Rudkøbing, which was granted its market town privileges back in 1287, whereas Købingshoved was eventually abandoned.

Today, the cove is navigated by a number of mostly local pleasure crafts, most of them lying at anchor sheltered by Bukø. If the wind blows a strong gale from the west, it is a good idea to stay away from the cove, which can be an unpleasant place to be with its breaking seas and wealth of shoals.

Rudkøbing Løb (Rudkøbing Channel)



Old wooden ships along the wharf in Søndre Bassin (Southern Basin) in Rudkøbing Harbour. Photo: Ole Mortensen

North of the Bredningen sea is Rudkøbing Løb (Rudkøbing Channel). A channel is a natural or dug-out fairway leading through a shallow section of the sea. Originally, Rudkøbing Løb was the outflow from Bredningen, which after the Ice Age was a lake. The place where the channel got closest to the coast was a good location for a port, and around this, the market town of Rudkøbing emerged. The town originally only had a pier, and it was not until 1826 that a proper harbour was established. Larger ships could not put into the pier, and coupled with a small gun battery, these conditions twice prevented the Swedish forces from landing in Rudkøbing during the Dano-Swedish War in October 1658. Unfortunately for the local population, the Swedes later managed to land on Northern Langeland and then proceeded to conquer the entire island, which was thoroughly pillaged. Shipping traffic increased in the 19th century, and when steam navigation really got going, the need for good and safe buoyage emerged. A pilot station was established in Rudkøbing to fulfil this need. The channel's natural course was a bit tortuous, and thus it was straightened and deepened in order to help the shipping industry. Today, the channel is three metres deep and is lit by three leading lights.

From Rudkøbing Harbour, the channel continues northwards through the 80 metre wide passage under the bridge connecting Langeland and the island of Siø. The bridge was built in 1962 and has a headroom of 26 metres. The channel continues due north, before ending at the northern sea buoy off Pæregård on Langeland and Vemmenæs Skov (Vemmenæs Forest) on Tåsinge. On the Langeland side of the channel is a few shoals; closest to the bridge is Bagergrunden (Baker's Shoal), then comes Rifbjerg Grund (Rifbjerg Shoal), and finally, furthest to the north, Middelgrund (Middle Shoal).

The current in Rudkøbing Channel is either northerly or southerly – and changes every six hours. For a short period of time, there is slack current. You have to beware of the current, as it can sometimes run 4-5 knots.

Pæregårdsbugten (Pæregård Bay)

Pæregårdsbugten (Pæregård Bay) is a small bay located north of Rifbjerg and Klavsebølle on Langeland and is sheltered by the headland called Næshoved. The pound net fishermen from Rudkøbing used the bay, and at one time, a large tuna was caught – which is an extremely rare occurrence in Denmark. The pound nets stood close along the shores of The South Fyn Archipelago,

but today, they have all vanished. The haul was simply too small to keep up the expensive pound net fishing.

Siøsund (Siø Strait)

Siøsund (Siø Strait) stretches from Rudkøbing Løb (Rudkøbing Channel) between Vemmenæs and Siø. The strait is not buoyed, but in some places it reaches depths of three to four metres. In 1960, the first part of the bridge construction connecting Fyn, Tåsinge and Langeland was finished; a dam and a low-level bridge leading across the western part of Siøsund. The boat traffic in this part of the strait has never been that busy, since the strait ends in Tåsinge Grund (Tåsinge Shoal), which is practically a dead end because of the water depth being less than one metre. The eastern part of the strait, however, has been used much more, primarily by ferries crossing from Vemmenæs to Rudkøbing. In the past, the ferry service was operated by ferryboats and barges with rows or sails.

Stenodden (The Stone Spit)

This reef is located northeast of Vemmenæs, and as its name reveals, it is best not to become too closely acquainted with it. A single seamark indicates the eastern end of the reef. Fortunately, it is rare that a pleasure craft sailing from Svendborg to Rudkøbing or vice versa fails to notice the buoy.

Lunkebugten (Lunke Bay)

Lunkebugten (Lunke Bay) is located north of Vemmenæs. The shoreline is 12 kilometres long and the wide-open bay makes for great visibility. The steady current pattern and weather conditions make for great yachting conditions. The bay, however, is nicknamed “Lumskebugten” – the treacherous bay – and it can easily surprise you, so be careful. In the summer, the outer parts of Lunkebugten can become very crowded, and the bay serves as a gathering point for all westbound traffic through the strait.

Valdemar's Castle



A prospectus of Valdemar's Castle as seen from the edge of the lake by G.D. Tschierscke, the architect behind the gatehouses, the carriage and stables wing as well as the tea pavilion. The latter is not pictured.

The people of Tåsinge have always had a close connection to Valdemar's Castle on Tronøret at the north side of Lunkebugten (Lunke Bay). The large manor used to own almost the whole island. A blacksmith who lived in the town of Troense owned his own house as well as a tiny garden, and he could rightly maintain, that “Together, me and the baron own the entire island.”

The main building faces the castle lake. For the last 350 years, the castle has been in the possession of the Juel family. Admiral Niels Juel received the castle for the prize money he won for giving the Swedish navy a sound beating in Køge Bugt (Køge Bay) in 1677.

The castle's current appearance is the result of a restoration in the late 19th century. It was originally constructed in the first half of the 17th century, when Christian IV decided that his son, Valdemar Christian, should have his own residence. Valdemar Christian, however, never got a chance to set foot in the castle.

Thurø and Troense



The photo shows schooners in Thurøbund (Thurø bay), c. 1915, with FALKEN (The Falcon) in the foreground. To the right is the islet of Kidholm.

When the people of Thurø talked about the fishermen from 200 years ago, they said that “they were so poor that they had to live by the water.” Today, this statement is no longer true. The shores surrounding Svendborgsund (Svendborg Strait) are densely built-up, and in order for as many as possible to get the coveted view of the water, the hills have also been put to use. The wealthiest of the Svendborg residents built the first mansions in the 19th century, all the way from the old market town to Skt. Jørgens Kirke (St George’s Church). Later, in the 1960s, the houses started to stretch from Skt. Jørgens Kirke to Rantzausminde – today, this section of the shore is popularly known as Guldkysten (The Gold Coast).

In previous times, the hills, forests, church spires, and neon lights helped the sailors navigate the labyrinth-like strait. These days, they have been replaced by leading lights, GPS, and buoyage to ensure a safe passage. Navigating the strait has become easier over time. The worst curves have been deepened and straightened making the passage a lot safer.

Thurø, Troense and Svendborg were united as one customhouse, and their extent corresponds almost exactly to what is today Svendborg Municipality. The whole area was a maritime centre, and for several decades in the 19th century, Svendborg was the largest shipping town in Denmark outside of Copenhagen. In the 19th century, more than half of the total Danish tonnage of wooden ships was built in more than 29 shipbuilding sites. The ship owners and builders supported each other well, and this led to a period of great building activity: In the years from 1870 to 1910, the shipbuilders in Svendborg, Thurø and Tåsinge managed to launch no fewer than 370 ships. At Pilekrogen west of Troense, in Svendborg Harbour and in Thurøbund, the numerous local ships would be laid up for the winter. After World War I, however, traditional sailing experienced difficulties as the number of steam ships increased rapidly, and the carriage charges fell from the record highs of the war.

Whilst Thurøbund still has two shipyards, schooners are no longer launched, but rather luxurious yachts. The old fishing hamlet of Gambøt with its small sheds and jetties is more modest and is a testament to the old fishing industry. The crescent-shaped islet of Kidholm, which is now uninhabited, is located in the middle of Thurøbund.

The skippers’ town of Troense with its well-preserved half-timbered houses is located on an almost rectangular point in the eastern part of Tåsinge facing Thurøbund. From Troense, skippers headed out on their long voyages, but the shipbuilding business

was also a factor here. The peculiar parcellation of Troense – with plots of one hundred metres or more – is a testament to the extensive fruit growing. Almost every garden in the city still has old fruit trees growing in them. The growing of fruit lent its name to a particular form of shipping: “pæreskuderne” (the pear crafts), which transported fruit from South Fyn to Copenhagen. This tradition is still upheld; each year in October, boats from all over South Fyn head out from Troense for the yearly “æbleræs” (apple race) towards Svendborg, where apples are sold directly over the railings.

Through Skaarupsund (Skaarup Strait) towards Thurø Past Aspelunds Hoved (Aspelund’s Head), the coast curves to the west, towards Skaarupsund (Skaarup Strait), which separates Fyn from Thurø. The route towards Svendborgsund (Svendborg Strait) continues southwards, since larger ships are not able to navigate Skaarupsund. The shallow strait is approximately four kilometres long and one kilometre wide with varying water depths of 0.6 to 5 metres – though less than 2 metres in most places. The Færgøgården House on Thurø is pictured.

Before 1934, when the dam connecting Thurø and Fyn was completed, there were several ferry services between the island and the mainland. Thurø Town’s many blind alleys leading towards the strait are from the era, when all communication was by sea. The so-called “Præstelandingen” (The Minister’s Landing) near Thurø Church was the pier to which the minister was sailed from Fyn, while Thurø did not have its own minister for a short period of time.

Thurø Rev (Thurø Reef) jots dangerously out into the sea southeast of Thurø, and you have to keep some distance to the reef’s tip. Thurø Rev has been formed by settlement on the southern and eastern coasts of Thurø, which over time has created beach ridges. The tide flows through natural channels, and the fragile tidal meadows are under environmental protection. Svendborgsund (Svendborg Strait)

The photo shows a transitional period at the turn of the century. Hauling spots, boatsheds and dinghies dominate the area closest to the water, while newly-built mansions gradually conquer the hills and the views of the strait.

The narrow, crooked sea between Tåsinge and Fyn is called Svendborgsund (Svendborg Strait). Although “Sund” originally meant “to swim”, the strait has always been one of Denmark’s most navigated seas. It stretches 13 kilometres from Grasten in the east to Lehnskov in the west and takes its name from the market town of Svendborg, which grew around one of the best natural harbours in the Archipelago.

Svendborgsund is long and full of dynamic currents. The current is highly irregular, as it is much affected by the wind. Strong winds from the northwest usually results in westerly currents with speeds of up to six knots, and the same applies when the strong winds come from the east. In extreme cases, the current may follow the same direction for several days. If the wind conditions are calm, however, the current changes direction every six hours with speeds of 2-3 knots.

Although the strait has always been difficult to navigate, it was the route to the rest of Archipelago – and to the rest of the world. The numerous reefs and flats, sudden changes in depth and the ever-changing currents have combined to make the passage a hazardous – but at the same time beautiful – voyage. The fairway is steeply lined by wide, almost dry shoals on both sides, and winds its way around flats and islets. Except for a steep forested cliff between Øksnebjerg and Christiansminde, the Fyn part of the shoreline lies low with gentle green slopes.

In the 1960s, a chain of bridges were built, which connected Langeland and Fyn, and in the process connected Tåsinge,

Langeland and Siø by land. Svendborgsundbroen (The Svendborg Strait Bridge) was completed in 1966, thus ending the ferry services in the strait. From the 1930s up until 1966, the crossing from Svendborg to Vindeby on Tåsinge was the second most busy ferry service in Denmark behind the Great Belt crossing. As long ago as the early 1960s, a million cars crossed the strait on the ferries each year!

The important strait has always been of vital importance for those in power. Several castle mounds dating back to the Middle Ages line it. On Tåsinge, the centre of power was Kærstrup. Further to the west, at the bend of the strait near Svendborg, the two Middle Age castles of Horseslot and Saksenborg were located very close to the shore. Saksenborg had a good location on a little spit reaching out into Svendborgsund south of the islet of Iholm, and from here, controlling the navigation of the strait was easy. The same can be said of Horseslot, which was located in Horseskov one kilometre along the coast further to the east. At different periods throughout time, these castles were able to collect duty or practice pirating. On Fyn, Skattertårnet in the fortified town of Svendborg as well as the royal castle of Ørkild have kept an eye on the strait.

The castles all originate in a period of time when The South Fyn Archipelago was very vulnerable. In the 12th century, Wendish pirates ravaged the area, and later, the Archipelago was a borderland between Denmark and the duchies of Sleswig and Holstein.

The strait used to be navigated by packet boats and ferries. The ferry called “Helge” from 1924 is still in service. “Helge” calls at five ports: Grasten, Troense, Valdemar’s Castle, Vindeby Øre and Christiansminde.

The Dead Man and Iholm

The shoal known as Dødemanden (The Dead Man) off Kogtved on Fyn has always collected its own duty. The name goes back to the first charts of the area from 1692, and is connected with the Dutch word for a dead body washed ashore. The water depth drops very suddenly at Dødemanden, and despite the buoyage and the boat’s GPS systems, lots of sailors still become “plot owners” on Dødemanden.

The shoal actually reached above sea level in the 1690s, when the first charts were drawn, and it is significantly larger on the older charts. Before the fairway was straightened, Dødemanden was connected to Middelgrunden (The Middle Shoal) in the middle of the channel. In 1922, a part of the shoal was dug out to make navigation easier, and today, Dødemanden is a separate shoal that lurks less than two metres below the surface.

Lundeborg Bælt (Lundeborg Belt) or Langelandssund (Langeland Strait)

The naming of the sea between Langeland and the east coast of Fyn has caused a lot of confusion. On some charts, such as no. 142, it remains unnamed and is considered a part of the Great Belt Strait, and on other charts, it has a name of its own, however, this name may vary from chart to chart. Unlike the Archipelago, this sea is deep, wide and without shoals, and for those exact reasons, it has been widely used by ships – primarily sailing to and from Svendborg and Rudkøbing.

When navigating this sea, where the water reaches depths of 8-9 metres along the Funish coast, the only dangerous shoal is Thurø Rev (Thurø Reef). Among the harbours in this area are Dageløkke and Lohals on Langeland and Lundeborg on Fyn. The Great Belt Strait begins at Hov, at the tip of Langeland.

Dageløkke Harbour was established in 1897. In the summer, Åsø Bro (Åsø Pier) and Dageløkke Harbour were popular destinations for Sunday excursions, and the local inn made sure that the visitors

did not go hungry. First and foremost though, the harbour was a freight port and a landing site. Today, the harbour serves exclusively as a marina, and the nearby holiday centre and all the bathing visitors dominate the surroundings.

Just off the coast of Langeland is a series of shoals, which are named after inland toponyms: Korsebølle Rev (Korsebølle Reef), Helletofte Sand (Helletofte Sand Bar), Egeløkke Rev (Egeløkke Reef), Snøde Rev (Snøde Reef), Stoense Løb (Stoense Channel) and Skattebølle Røn (Skattebølle Shoal). The exception to this rule is Rødgrund (Red Shoal). Stoense Løb is located between Rødgrund and Skattebølle Røn and was previously used by smaller sailing ships navigating Stoense Harbour.

The Lohals spit is located further to the north – and later lent its name to the harbour and surrounding settlement. The town’s first harbour was established during the English Wars in 1807-1814. After the war was over, the harbour fell into disrepair and was replaced by a stone pier 18 metres in length and sheltered to the southwest. The pier was mostly used for the ferry service to Nyborg on Fyn and Skælskør and Korsør on Sjælland. In 1841, a total of 547 travellers used the harbour. The first steam liners, known as paddle steamers, stopped outside Lohals, and passengers were sailed by boat to and from the steamers.

Around the turn of the century in the year 1800, shipping was an important industry on northern Langeland, and boatmen and skippers from Hou had decked boats and small cutters, with which they carried trade between Langeland, Fyn and Sjælland.

Lohals later became a ferry port. Beginning in 1897, Det Sydfyenske Dampskibsselskab (The South Fyn Steam Ship Company) operated the service between Lohals and Korsør, and from 1932 to 1963 the motor ferry called M/S Lundeborg crossed the sea between Lohals and Lundeborg. Lohals Harbour was dominated by local freight ships. The number of ships decreased gradually, but the real decline only began in the 1950s. Fishing was also an important occupation in Lohals, and in the inter-war period, it became the most important, with 30-40 motorised fishing vessels as well as a fishing association and a sales co-operative – but fishing, too, has lost its importance in the area. When the motorway bridge spanning the Great Belt Strait was opened in 1998, the ferry service between Lohals and Korsør shut down. Now, Lohals Harbour’s only assets are the pleasure crafts and tourists who visit the town in the summer.

Smørstakken and Smørstakkeløbet are located off the coast near Lohals. Smørstakken is a small islet, which is now under water, and the channel called Smørstakkeløbet just south of the islet is buoyed. From Smørstakken, the shoal continues northwards with shallow water and partly submerged rocks all the way to the sandy island of Vresen. There is, however, a buoyed channel near Kobbertybet. The old bearing is the spire of Svindinge Kirke (Svindinge Church) in line with the beacon at Teglgård.

When sailing north along the coast of Fyn, past Thurø and the entrance to Skaarupsund (Skaarup Strait) near Skaarupøre, you will pass a small settlement on the beach. Further to the north, you will encounter two headlands called Aspelunds Hoved and Elsehoved. At the latter, a small sectored light is located on the beach. Two nautical miles further to the north, you will reach Lundeborg, which is surrounded by forests and has a great view towards Lohals. There are no difficulties involved in entering the harbour that contains a new marina shaped like a snail, and the old fishing and ferry port.

Today, Lundeborg is a popular holiday destination with large camping sites nearby, a sandy beach and a well-preserved harbour front dominated by the warehouse and the merchant’s house, which is currently being used for exhibits and as a restaurant. The harbour is also used by Oure Idrætsskole (Oure Sports School – located nearby), who own several boats, on which students are taught navigation and race against each other.