



Super Brevet Scandinavia 2022

19.-22.08.2022



Underneath the Northern Skies

Prologue

"And there is nothing more beautiful than the moment before the journey, the moment when the horizon of tomorrow visits us and tells us of its promises"

(Milan Kundera)

London, Paris ... Hirtshals? Once a year I try to ride a 1200km brevet. After Merselo-Verona, Paris-Brest-Paris and Bord'eau I decided to make a ride through Scandinavia in 2022: Super Brevet Scandinavia, short SBS is the magic formula.



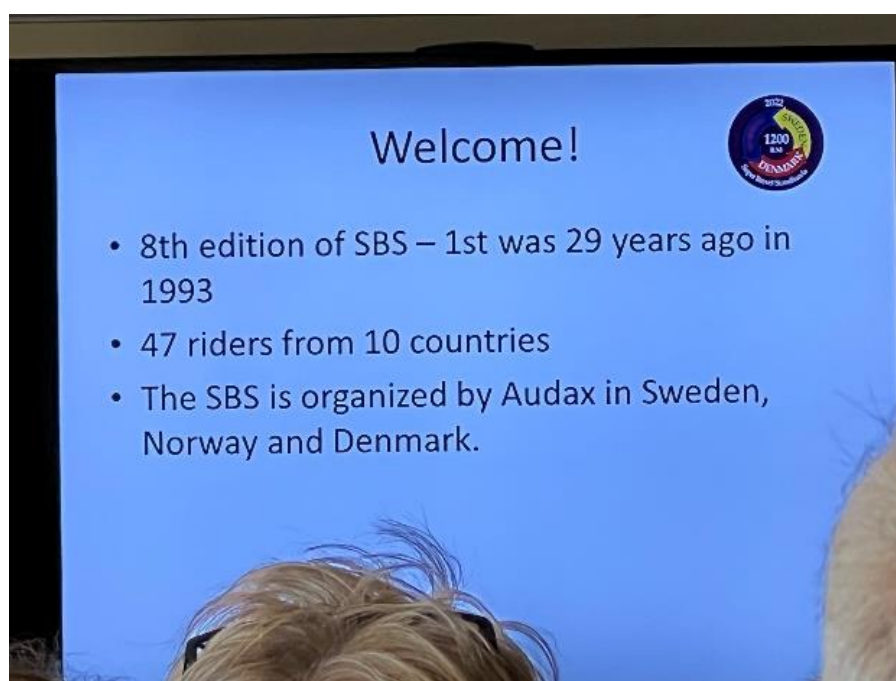
The participation in Merselo-Verona was in fact the result of dreaming to combine my "cycling favorite countries" into one route: The idea of starting in the Netherlands, passing Germany, crossing the Alps, and finally arriving in Verona was fascinating. Finally, I continued my route from Verona until Venice. Paris-Brest-Paris (PBP) is a "must" for every randonneur because of its history and the special nature and atmosphere of the event. Last year then, during the ride along the coasts and canals of the Netherlands (the Bordeaux brevet has been cancelled several times, therefore "Bord'eau" within the Netherlands was introduced), I tried to be maximally independent, "free": neither (hotel) bed nor restaurant, but only with the help of bivouac and stove I provided (one exception: spectacular pasta at an Italian restaurant in Utrecht, a few kilometers to finish left). Sleeping on the beach (or in the bus stop) or cooking at 2:00 a.m. have been highlights of this tour last year.



During all those (and other) brevets I'm constantly exploring the environment, looking out for interesting places, people, perspectives to serve as photo/movie motif. In addition to the investigational aspects, I like the idea of reduction: just eating, drinking, less sleep and sometimes 20 hours a day cycling has a kind of meditative element, which makes you "think about the things really important to think of" ...



My knowledge on Scandinavia was extremely limited so far - dog sledding, Pippi Longstocking, fjords and gritty crime stories. Playing piano and guitar Edward Grieg has been one of the musical encounters - you should know Peer Gynt suites (even if living in Germany or somewhere else), his piano concerto and maybe piano pieces like Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen, which I once tried to play on the piano. Especially Jan Garbarek's music has accompanied me for a long time with its charismatic saxophone sound and lately the singer from the Lofoten, Kari Bremnes.



Denmark, Sweden and Norway - in 90 hours: this event offered the opportunity to take a look at a landscape, "unknown and unexplored". At PBP I was part of a team of 5 riders, all living in the same town (Ahaus) – in fact within a radius of less than one kilometer. Obviously, my hometown seems to be a randonneur's nest. This time only Christian went with me.

On Thursday morning we started at 6:00 o'clock towards Hirtshals in North Jutland, almost at the northernmost point of Denmark. Passing Hamburg without any problems by car we arrived early at

our destination in northern Denmark. In the afternoon, the obligatory bicycle check was announced. In the late afternoon followed a briefing by the organizer for the 42 participants.

Christian and I used the break in between for a short ride to do some sight-seeing in the town: light rain, the vast landscape, the sober-functional harbor - even the existing and as motif quite suitable lighthouse could not convince me: Denmark is definitely not Italy - no narrow streets, espresso smell on the corner and azure sea in front of the Mediterranean cliffs.



I hadn't really arrived yet and my spirit of discovery still needed to be awakened yet. What did they say in the briefing? Viking burial mounds, Hamlet's castle, vineyards, Having all those ferries (I "love" ferries) in mind there was still hope and the idea that "there was a whole lot of countryside waiting for me somewhere".



After a sumptuous dinner (not to forget the dessert of chocolate cake and apple ice cream) I went to bed early, only to get up at 4:00 for early breakfast. Finally, I was standing ready to go at 5:00 am in the dark in front of the hotel with all the starters, ready to go ... and my navigation device shows my home address with all familiar roads instead of navigation instructions to start in front of my hotel at Hirtshals.

“Searching Satellites” , “Searching Satellites” ... the field of riders starts to move, last goodbye ... and I was searching satellites ...



Day 1

"Fra Jylland i Danmark til Ängelholm i Sverige"

Rising early, breakfast was already on the agenda shortly after 4:00 am. I was watching fascinated Christian eating vast quantities of calories in form of rolls, scrambled eggs, ham and much more. Knowing that "no fight without food", I still have difficulties with such portions.

More than 300 km were on the program on the first day. The route led from the north of Jutland first about 200 km in the direction of the south, to turn then with a longer ferry journey beginning with Aarhus to the east. There were four ferry trips on the first day - and associated ferry times to be considered as boundary conditions.



A good start is important: my performance profile over the day is unfortunately not constant and rather resembles that of a damped oscillation. Mostly highly/over-motivated and fast, my base speed gradually goes down and approaches - mathematically speaking - asymptotically my almost "unlimited" maintainable base speed, with which I then nevertheless manage a daily distance of up to 500 km on flat(!) terrain and not excessive headwind. With this basic confidence in my own strength, which comes from so many long tours, my initial nervousness subsides very quickly.



In the formula for coping with long distances, the feel-good factor is also crucial for me: Good-fitting cycling clothes are important - in recent years I've always chosen clothes from Cafe du Cycliste for me. Unfortunately, high-priced like Rapha or Castelli it is worth to pay attention to sales or exclusive offers. Since I never see myself as a bike "race" rider but as an "explorer with bike", I do not need a highly aerodynamic, space evaluated, nano weight, super-duper membrane race cut and I do not prefer full body advertising clothes, feeling like plastic or resorting to all colors of the color palette jerseys. I like clothes that feels like clothes, subtly coordinated colors that don't make me look like a cycling alien invading the landscape. Sustainably created, timeless, comfortable with a friendly tasteful vibe. Especially Breton style and striped patterns have done it for me - and so, for example, my favorite shirt is a striped shirt, model Suzanne (https://www.cafeducycliste.com/de_de/la-gazette/le-cafe-le-breton/), which is already almost 10 years old. Note all those small detail solutions - I really love it ...

To feel good overall also includes a suitable road bike. As a companion on so many tours, a certain relationship there is – a lot of thoughts in the choice is the beginning of a long friendship that can be relied on. Before the Brevet once again at the bicycle dealer of my confidence checked, I was confident that my bike would carry me over the distance. I was a bit concerned about the tires because of unpleasant experiences during a gravel tour with wife and dog (with the Continental GP 5000). Through Scandinavia I mounted Continental 4 Seasons with 25er width - due to drop bags (speak luggage transport of a bag) between the checkpoints no excessive luggage was necessary.



My worst-case scenario would have been a major technical problem "somewhere in the Swedish wilderness": an abort maximum far away from the starting point combined with a return trip, which would probably be a Nordic Odyssey, keeping in mind, that bike transport in trains is not allowed. My tool bag was well filled, three tubes always there (more in the drop bag) - normal repairs I would have under control (... but what is normal on a 1200 km ride?).

But abort but was not on the agenda, but departure in this me still completely foreign landscape in northern Europe.

First day, 5:15 a.m., ... still looking for satellites. The field of riders had started to move, it was still dark, and they set off at a brisk pace for the first kilometers. The start is important, it is important to "keep up", to get a buffer, not to be behind at the beginning. On narrow paths we rush through the still dark morning. Bend left, bend right - I orient myself to the other drivers, I'm under stress, because I can still see the home roads on the display. Reboot does me good. While I'm rushing through the

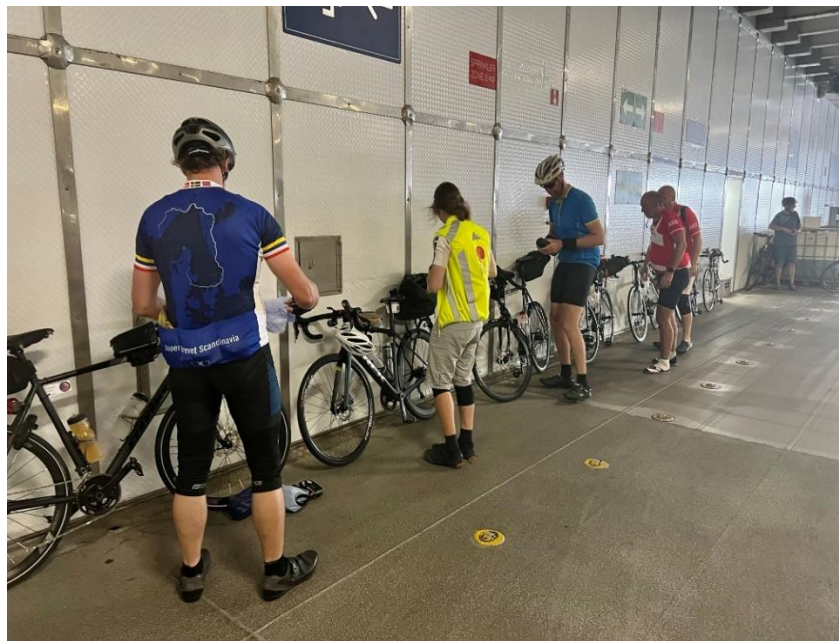
darkness at the same time as the group in front, it's important to keep a safe distance. While the device reboots, I fervently hope that a line will then appear on the postage stamp-sized area in the display. Agonizingly long minutes - then finally I see the familiar view: the thin blue line, sometimes direction arrows - having to drive plan B according to (printed out plan) is not necessary. The track of today's route, composed of individual sections, shines clearly and distinctly towards me: I would not get lost on this tour and the 300 km still to be driven on today's day I would - if necessary - still find it that way.

The route preparation was more difficult for me than usual: actually, I can remember places and geographical features, landmarks, bridges, ... well. Even today, after more than 40 years, I can list the names of the mountains in the Alps where I hiked as a child back then. But the Scandinavian names cause me a bit of trouble: often long, the letters seem to me to be strung together at random, as if a Scrabble game had fallen on the floor and then a combination - predominantly Ä, Ö, Y had been randomly used in the naming.

The first control/first ferry ride was reached at km 85: less than 3 hours, over 30 km/h average - quite good! The sun had risen in the meantime and a beautiful morning started: pleasant temperatures, blue sky, slightly undulating terrain, views of the sea every now and then - so slowly the whole thing began to please me.

Energy management - another topic to deal with being a randonneur. The combination of hub dynamo with Busch E-Werk and small, but efficient (10000 mAh) powerbanks provided a stable power supply with fail-safety, in addition my navigation device (Garmin Edge 530) has its own, additional battery that almost lasts for the entire route.

Navigation and communication safe - this is important.



Actually, pace was too high for me. Somewhere around km 130 or 150 I would probably drop out of the first group and then switch to my personal brevet mode. While I was already starting to slowly (mentally) drop out, Christian didn't seem to be impressed by the pace. With stoic composure, he can drive speeds for long times, which I reached briefly downhill. Relaxed, always friendly, keeping an overview, caring - I can hardly imagine a better companion and we drove many kilometers together, long sections but - each at his own pace - also for themselves.

The 2nd ferry was important, it was nevertheless unnecessarily long waiting times in the port to avoid, since the journey from Aarhus to Odden amounted to over one hour and thus a break on board would be ideal. Had I still flirted in the morning with a hoped departure at 15:15, we were suddenly already at before 13:00 in Aarhus ... and could take the ferry at 12:55. An average of 30 km/h on the first 208 km - that reminded me of my Mont Ventoux Brevet, where the Freiburg- Besançon section was also reached after 7 hours. There it was: the "cushion".

It went well. Break on board. I can regenerate well and quickly ... and sleep in the most impossible places. The ferry ride passed in a flash.



As soon as we disembarked, the group started moving again. With high speed – or better: very, very high speed - we raced through the already announced vineyards.

I looked at the speedometer: 47 km per hour? I had to get out of the group. Very quickly. Otherwise, I would end up as a wreck on the side of the road in a quarter of an hour at the latest. Christian also thought the posted speed was a bit too high and because we already had a decent stretch behind us, we now drove on briskly, but not as fast. Emerging light rain had now taken the place of the blue sky.



The organizer had pointed out in advance the unfortunate combination of rain and Danish roads, which often leads to breakdowns: indeed, it caught many and in almost every group of riders there were later reports of punctures. Christian was also allowed to pull a sharp stone out of his coat ... and patch it. My coats held tight - someone up there probably had mercy on me and remembered my gravel tour to France in May, where I had to deal with punctures very often.

The rain now did not bother, undeterred we headed for the next ferry. Mikhael from Sweden gave us "Scandinavian novices" background information on country and people and Hamlet's city (Helsingør) was also the end of the section in Denmark.

From Helsingborg on the Swedish side, it was still a good 20 km to the hotel, where warm food, a soft bed for a few hours hoped for rest. Not quite half past eight we arrived at the hotel: I had expected an arrival for me only at midnight - so I was overjoyed that the first day had gone so well.

That gave hope...



Day 2

"En liten biltur genom sverige"

After a hearty dinner (potatoes, peas, roast, salad) it was then "off to bed", not without setting the alarm clock, so that I do not miss the rightful departure deep asleep.

My room neighbor arrived later, frustrated: also, rather had to patch the tire twice, but what weighed worse was an imbalance in the rear wheel and rather saw no chance to continue and finish the ride. A sturdy wheel, solid wheelset - no "experiments": for such long rides with modest bike store infrastructure beyond that is hugely important. My road bike is light, but robust. Purchased 6 years ago from a Rotwild factory rider, it has proven itself on many long tours. The mounted carbon wheelset DT-Swiss RC 28 Spline DB I had after a good 50000 km mileage at the manufacturer again refurbished.

Sustainability = quality + careful handling + maintenance.

Alternatively, I have a second, relatively robust (gravel-suitable) wheelset DT Swiss DB 521, in which a hub dynamo is installed. For SBS I had decided on a "good mix": front hub dynamo, rear light wheel (especially since no excessive weight to carry).

Speaking of "excess weight": at the last 1200km in self-supply mode, I was surprised that my body weight, despite the effort, had not changed: starting weight 80 kg (at 1.83 m tall) = finish weight = my "feel-good" weight.

This year, a little more than 3 kg are missing - I must have lost them somewhere ...



2nd day, 05:15 o'clock: Breakfast is announced and – of course - necessary, nevertheless, the longest stage stands with almost 360 km. The number of altitude meters was manageable with a little over 2000 hm, although the altitude profile after just under 20 km suggested an almost vertical wall. Even if I tried to "reassure" myself that this looked so funny only because of the long distance and the otherwise few meters of altitude, was a distortion due to the scale, and in general the mountain was

not a mountain but at best a hill: "psychologically speaking" it looked unpleasantly like almost a right angle - I would probably crash at km 20 against a vertical wall ...

Shortly after 6:00 Christian and I set off: a beautiful morning, fog and sun fighting for supremacy. I love these morning rides with joyful anticipation of conquering new worlds, the still dewy air and the silence of nature broken only by the soft hum of the wheels. In the back of my mind, I had "the Wall" - this climb behind me, the rest (just under 340 km) was half so wild, but the biggest climb was already done. After 25 km, I was surprised to find out, that the climb was really not that difficult and on top of that was rewarded with a wonderful descent. Was I already so far that I did not mind climbs anymore? No matter - I had made my "mountain" (for everyone else: "hill"), now all I had to do was ride.

Shortly after "my" hill we met Laetitia, a rider from France. She had probably also wanted to take the climb for herself to then continue with the next best group then. "Bonjour Laetitia, pas de problème tu es la bienvenue pour rouler avec nous!"

The next major city was Halmstad after about 60 km. With more than 65000 inhabitants, one of the few larger cities during the Swedish part of the tour. The place dragged on endlessly it felt, so I was finally glad when we were finally outside in nature again.



At a comfortable pace - knowing full well that there were still some miles to go - we headed north, first to the coast, but then steering away from the coast back inland as we went along, leaving Gothenburg on the left.

No excessive gradients, but very slightly hilly it went now in the steady up and down past meadows, lakes, fields ... and yes, there they were finally, the typical red (sometimes yellow, sometimes gray) Swedish wooden houses in their distinctive design. Yes, this is where she must live, Pippilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Efraim's Daughter Longstocking: countryside, small towns just as Astrid Lindgren described them. Especially the many lakes, along which we drove in bright sunshine, could inspire me.

Other highlights were the Oldtimers that seemed to appear out of nowhere, often American road cruisers that went beyond all dimensions, but also the complete history of Volvo models of the last

decades. Spectacular cars in gorgeous sunny, not too warm weather. It doesn't get any better than this.

After a good 200 km then a control ... and a restaurant. The latter is not a matter of course - often I wondered in the small towns or "cluster of houses" how life works here: no bakery or the "tabacchi-inclusive-expresso-machine-for-just-stopping-and-drinking-espresso" stores I love so much in Italy. Nothing like that here, few (or no stores), partly deserted gas stations (or only so fully automated-unmanned-"service"-points). In this respect I was glad that

a) had more than half of the route behind me - that's always good for the constant distance-course-calculations of the brain

b) I had chosen Spaghetti Bolognese: a little Italian cuisine, half an hour of "dolce fa niente", that I had earned, since I had let two groups go before, because on the one hand they were too fast for me and on the other hand I preferred to "Pleasure Cycling" a bit through the countryside



The waitress in the restaurant liked obviously my way of travelling - she served the food with delay to all the drivers hurrying away before me ... but very quickly to me. Thus, I could join again the Belgian-Dutch-French-German-Danish mixed group, well knowing that in 30 to 50 km all the randonneurs would drive away from me. No matter, I was well on schedule, felt good and another 160 km could not really scare me.



In fact, it was not even 25 km until I was again alone in the field for me. I often "forget" to drink regularly - for the ride I had resolved to pay better attention to this.

After another 80 km followed a control in an almost "classic" form: the gas station. If a store or even a coffee machine is available, it is the epitome of relaxation, a place of longing during strenuous passages ... and a welcome place to refill drinking bottles and to examine the delicacies of the fast-food industry.

Thus strengthened, I set out on the next and last 80 km. The randonneur scene is not so big – I realized during a conversation with another German fellow rider that we had many mutual acquaintances.

In fact, time flew by and shortly after midnight we approached our destination. What irritated me a little was an intense, but rather unpleasant smell that was obviously over the whole place. Unconfirmed cause for this was allegedly a pea processing factory. Good thing that in the accommodation the smell was essentially locked out. Sliced meat, rice, of course peas - even if it was already deep in the night it had to be eaten.

Full and satisfied I fell into bed - more than half of the total distance behind me, tomorrow promised to be rather more "harmless": "only" 280 km with a little more than 2200 meters of altitude ...

Dag 3:

"For a man will not have the strength to struggle forward all day until the sun sets if he is hungry for food."

(Illiad, Homer)

Asleep like a groundhog, my alarm clock jolted me out of sleep at just after 5am. After a short orientation "Where am I, who am I, what am I doing here?", however, I was quickly wide awake. Switching between wakefulness and sleep is usually not difficult for me, I only know the two binary states "awake" and "asleep". If I feel tired on the way, I have no problem to go to the next best bench or similar, lie down and do 5 minutes of "power napping". On the second day being somewhere between kilometers 250 and 300 I searched for a nice place to lie down and sleep for about 10. A passing passenger later asked me "Was it you who took the beauty sleep"? Yes - and it helped a lot ...

In the context of my preparation, I had classified the 3rd day as the still easiest: less than 300 kilometers, the number of altitude meters a little more than the day before, but in relation to the entire stage the incline was not too hard.



A varied route: from Brålanda not far from Lake Mjörn, it went first in a northerly direction, and then after about 20 km swung in a northwesterly direction. At the bend there was a small slope, then as if on a Table Mountain over the town of Ed until kilometer 100 remaining on the height. After a little more than half of the distance came Fredrikstad. Here was a ferry that in principle was easy to avoid - but who does that?

The timing at the control in Ed was suspended to avoid that the time window for the control as well as for the participants to reach the finish was not too small or the logistics around it not too complicated. In the further course a secret control was to be expected, which also came....

Shortly after 6:00 a.m.: the racing bike was checked once again, the day's provisions and water were stowed, the drop bag was handed in, breakfast was served, ... Boredom does not arise in the morning. Then we finally started at a cool 8 degrees. The weather prospects were good, although one or the

other rain shower was to be expected. First, however, the sun once again greeted through wisps of fog, clear, fresh air, blue sky, which increases motivation and joy for the tour immensely.



The course of the path was oriented to a parallel railroad line. Few places, much nature at a nice pace Christian and I rolled towards the ex-control in Ed. As so often I had to take a photo stop: View of lake, house, forest, landscape just had to be held - oh yes: a sign pointed to the border crossing to Norway. Almost we overlooked the sign and would have entered unsuspectingly in Norway.

In the meantime, I drove again with the Dutch-German-Danish-Belgian-French group. In between it went through my head that this is a very nice picture for a common Europe - male and female riders, most different bikes, a common goal, no winner or loser, different speeds, respectful friendly interaction, enjoyment of nature and environment - with this lineup the world would probably be a better one...

Shortly before Halden after 100 km was a gas station on the way: a few fellow riders had already chosen a sunny place outside to make an extensive break. The gas station was one of those "all-around-happy-make-suppliers", seats inside and outside, various coffees and variations, cakes, rolls - just the thing to strengthen. While Christian now wanted to start with a departing group, I was not in such a hurry, especially since a critical look at the sky told me that rain would still fall within the next quarter of an hour. No sooner had Christian's group disappeared from my field of vision than the sky darkened and dark, gloomy clouds began to gather. Had Christian been my guarantor for good weather and had my luck run out? Probably not, because happy the one who did not have to experience the following downpour on the open field: it poured as if a fireman would sweep the rescue hose on a directed head-on with his water jet from the street. No, I did not envy Christian at this moment - but I was sure that he would have found a shelter.

After a few minutes the rain subsided, so that I could still drive on with a rain jacket, but almost dry. A short time later, the spook was over again as quickly as it had come.

With Frederikstad soon followed a larger city with the previously mentioned ferry. In the briefing once again pointed out to choose as a destination Cicignon, I naturally asked myself, where this but so not

Scandinavian sounding name for a district in Frederikstad comes from? Perpignon, Avignon, Cicignon - that sounded logical, but not Bydalen, Samertu, Glemmen, Cicignon.

Here is the answer: Johan Caspar de Cicignon was governor of Fredrikstad (https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_Caspar_de_Cicignon) from 1677.

Just before Moss, the next ferry port, was the secret checkpoint - following the established route according to regulations was rewarded with a piece of cake on top of that.



However, the ride to the ferry then became a race against the oncoming rain. A few kilometers before Moss, I quickly put on my rain jacket and then rode at maximum speed to the ferry - the effort made sense, as I had a real chance of just being spared the rain and escaping the cloudburst that was on the horizon. In fact, I made it, stayed dry - and the ferry was already waiting for me, so that I could board almost immediately upon arrival at the port. On the car deck, in the dry - I used the crossing for a little nap, to let my thoughts wander. I had not yet reached my destination.

"By ferry across the Oslo Fjord" - that alone sounds like Scandinavia, and even if I didn't drift through the polar sea as I did with the Fram (<https://www.helmholtz.de/newsroom/artikel/fridtjof-nansen-auf-dem-weg-zum-nordpol/>), it felt - from the point of view of a Münsterlander who only ever cavorts in southern Europe and is addicted to espresso and Aperol - a lot like "the far north," "almost the island of Svalbard," and didn't it make sense to keep an eye out for whales accompanying me?

After half an hour the trip was over, the sun was shining, I was neither in Lofoten nor in Rijkavik ... and the next destination on the agenda was McDonalds in Sandefjord. I had resolved not to dawdle too much, I still wanted to arrive there in the light.

Besides gas stations, McDonalds stores play a special role in the life of a randonneur. Long hours, heated, food with high recognition value - no matter where you ride, McDonalds is a kind of constant, a predictable, safe haven. Eat, drink, sleep, warm up - a destination worth the effort ...

And there they all were: the fast riders, the real bike racers, but also the bike travelers and slow riders like me - peacefully gathered over burgers and coke, throwing all diet plans and recommendations overboard.

It felt good to relax and eat something, knowing that it was less than 60 km to the day's destination in Skien. If you had made it this far, to the promised land of burgers and patties, then tomorrow, with its many meters of altitude, would also be doable



Dag 4:

"Be patient, all things are difficult before they become easy."

(French saying)

The last day had arrived. Really? Was I already that far? Sometimes you lose track of time on such a long brevet, days of the week are no longer perceived correctly and time is defined only by distances between checkpoints, food or sleep. The last night of this 1200 was over, as fast as an arrow the time had passed (<http://www.planetlyrik.de/.../friedrich-schillers.../>)

Long looking forward to this Nordic expedition, I am now facing the last leg. It seems like ages ago when I talked about this section on the eve of the brevet: the many meters of altitude, only a little time, it will be tight... I had already seen myself: panting, crawling up any serpentine, exhausted, resigned, too late....



On this last morning in Skien the world looked different: everything had gone well so far, no physical complaints, slept well, satisfied, now just "keep it up"....

To plan brevets, I use an Excel spreadsheet, which I first feed with the organizer's route data and then add a few algorithms.

One of the qualities of a good software developer is to break down complex requirements and simpler tasks, to develop a "model" from a confusing scenario that can be described with clear parameters and simple functions. For me, I have developed a "personal brevet formula", which in addition to route length, specific average speed still knows delay, offset, speed gradient or control rounding coefficient. At the very end, I then have a reduced number of recommended/desired place-time pairs, rounded to half/whole hour.

In conjunction with Komoot, where I check actual route and elevation profile, I can then actually "forget everything again" after such a fully comprehensive data analysis: I only remember the few, random times for official controls or my checkpoints. (Screenshot with target-actual comparison is attached to the pictures).

In addition to the theoretical preparation, I have gradually increased the training in the spring: a complete series (200, 300, 400 and 600 km) I would not actually have had to drive for the qualification

for SBS, counted the 1200 from the previous year. (But I like cycling too much) Nevertheless I did the series.

The 200 in Heerlen into the Ardennes was also important to me (<https://www.randonneurs.nl/brevet/heerlen-2022-200-3/>) many altitude meters - comparable to the last SBS stage. The Ardennes tour had been fun - despite mountains. Or because of the mountains?

I would only need to drive the first 50 km to 9:00, from then on it would be "just a normal 200". Already driven so many 200s, this distance has lost its terror. Even with my dog I have already participated in three official Brevets (https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2953839518024868&id=100001965456214).

Last day, 5:00 a.m. get up, have breakfast, get the bike ready to go.... With a mixture of nervousness and joyful anticipation, I set off early: to complete the first 50 km before 9:00 a.m. - that's the first goal I set myself.



It is still cool and so foggy that I switch on the light after a few kilometers. In "gentle up and down" it goes forward ... and the longer we drive the more the confidence increases: today will be a good day.

The weather is worthy of a "finale", but gradually the fog dissolves and slowly give the view of a fantastically staged landscape free: Such a crap - I could stop every 500 meters, either lying flat on the ground or taking other positions me on the search for motifs for photos - more than abundant they were offered to me. Cabin on island in lake in front of rock wall, Christian's silhouette half immersed in fog in front of Nordic landscape, meandering roads through impressive nature. ... and in the middle of this full of motives dripping panorama Christian and I drove, more briskly, but nevertheless in relaxed driving style (surprisingly this applied also to me).

Well before 9 o'clock the 50km mark was reached - an average of over 20km - it was going well.

We had earned a reward in the form of a hot chocolate. After a short break, we continued, or rather started; the start of a "standard 200 brevet" ...

Following a mysterious dramaturgy, we continued towards the 1st control, in the center of a breathtaking landscape.

Unforgettable the sight of an endlessly long road leading downhill in several steps, at the sight of which I briefly felt transported to Alaska.

Pure cycling pleasure - doesn't brevet mean exam? Here it was just reward.

A few hundred meters before the control, a wonderfully staged bridge (I love bridge architecture) made me stop once again, pausing to enjoy the sight. A moment that wanted to be captured not only as a picture.



The control itself turned out to be a "supermarket lying in the glaring sunlight, blessed with extensive seating, offering almost all-embracing products".

I had arrived, in paradise, in the "Randonneurs paradise".



Wonderful drinks (Coke, chilled cappuccino), all kinds of delicacies and on top of that also variations of licorice, with which I could reward, bribe or blackmail myself on the way if necessary. I could stay here forever...

But there were still a few kilometers ahead of me.

With irrepressible thirst for action, fully motivated I dashed off, only to slow down a bit after a few kilometers: I had hurried away from Christian and Jörg, who had joined me. No, this ride could not end too quickly - the way was indeed the goal.



When I ride road bike tours with my wife Andrea, it can sometimes happen that during individual sections of the route a constant "What is beautiful here", "Did you just see that", "Fantastic way", "Wonderful" are said almost mantra-like repeatedly in front of us. Here on this stretch, that would be the same...

"This section of the route was planned by a cyclist" I said to Jörg a few kilometers later – although this described inadequately how beautifully the course of the road had been embedded in nature.



The last 25 km to Kristiansand was almost only downhill. Jörg, Christian and I took still (unconsciously) last smaller upward gradients, but we knew, that nothing would stop us now.



Relaxed riding we approached the goal, a few curves still, then we saw familiar faces.

Arrived....

Epilogue

"Those who stay on the coast cannot discover new oceans"
(Fernando Magellan)

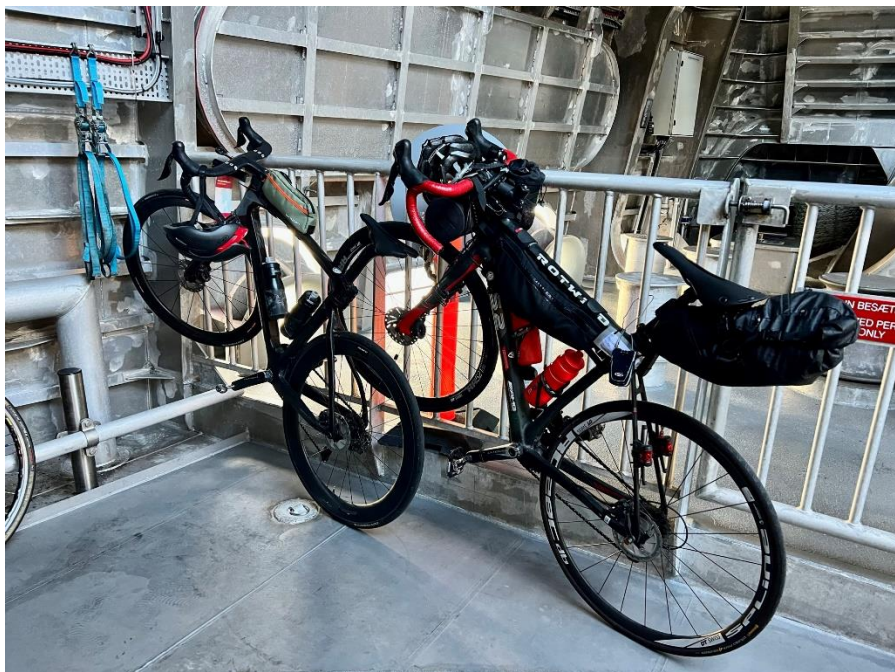
I was standing. In front of the hotel. At the destination - but the destination was not the goal, but the experience of Scandinavia: Denmark, Sweden, Norway - this simply logical routing for a randonneur when looking at a map, once around.



Neither exhaustion nor euphoria - rather a complete satisfaction.

An exciting tour had found a wonderful conclusion on the last day. Altitude meters and distance had only had a meaning in the morning, the glances at the clock became less and less in the day. From controlled brevet- seamlessly transitioned into enjoyment mode.

If I was still nervous at the start in view of the 1200 km ahead of me combined with a considerable number of altitude meters, this feeling faded from day to day. At the beginning still a slight uncertainty when a group of fellow riders rushed past me and I had to check the speedometer to make sure whether I was still riding or standing, I gradually began to find my own rhythm. And whether I arrived for dinner at 19:00 or not until 00:30 - that was not a problem, on the contrary, I had much more time for observations, discoveries and pleasure cycling.



My "SBS 2022" project went according to plan: good preparation simplifies execution and ensures relaxation, which in turn feeds back to unencumbered road cycling.

It was a SMART goal that I had set for myself. The theory behind this term from the field of project management can undoubtedly be transferred well to a brevet, especially longer variants

(<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/smart-goals-project>).

S like specific (or else like Scandinavia): a large white spot on the map had to be filled with life, many impressions, views and moments collected: It was my goal to get to know the north....

M as in measurable: 1200 Km, about 12000 Hm, 90 hours, 12 controls, 3 countries, 6 ferries (+ 1 for the return trip). Average speed, daily distance, min/max temperature, min/max ascent, maximum speed, number of breaks, calorie consumption, fluid requirement, The list of possible, measurable parameters is almost endless and if you descend into the shallows of the configuration menus of many a navigation device, you will find even more...

A for Achievable: Challenging, but achievable. This is the fourth time I'm doing a 1200 brevet, meaning it's realistically doable given good preparation and health. I had successfully completed all three previous 1200s, had never had to drag myself to the finish line with the last of my strength, had never been so overwhelmed as to consider breaking off. On the first 1200 alone, everything was still so new to me that perhaps a "I didn't know I couldn't do it, that's why I was successful" applied ...

R for Relevant: What is important (to me)? Thus we are at the question of motivation, the will to show commitment, not to give up at the first problem. I am motivated: less in realization of a sporty maximum performance by maximum speed, but in the fact that I am (terribly) curious: I would like to know how life works up there, what is different or the same to life in Germany, Netherlands, France or Italy. I want to cycle (also starts with R) ... through lots of nature, (still) unknown towns and villages, ride ferries, meet people (and talk to them) ... and isn't the road bike ideal for that? Not too fast to pay attention to the small anecdotes, experiences and discoveries, but still fast enough to cover large distances in a comparatively short time - plus 1200 km of intense sensory roller coaster ride: smells, heat, thirst, speed ...

T for Terminated: Start on 19.08.2022 at 5:00 o'clock in Hirtshals/Denmark, then 90 hours available up to 22.08.2022 at 23:00 o'clock in Kristiansand/Norway. Rarely are projects in the professional environment so precisely circumscribed...

Thus, it was an extremely successful project: fantastic landscape, many impressions, nice encounters. Riding such a tour was not only a test ("Brevet") but also in a certain way a gift - in view of all the big catastrophes in the world, which often also cause catastrophes on a small scale, it flashed through my mind in many a beautiful moment how privileged I was to participate in such an impressive event and that sometimes gratitude, appreciation and humility are required.

My gratitude goes first to the organizers, who have made such a brevet possible: well organized I felt good all around. Information on the tour itself well prepared, the organization of accommodation, food and support on site, transport of the drop bag and so much more.

To a support team that has always been friendly, open minded and helpful. I was always looking forward to the evening reception in the hotel or on the road at controls. Therefore once again an explicit, warm and big (very big) thank you:

For you it may be a, every 4 years recurring, cycling event through your home country - for me it was a unique, unforgettable experience and a chance to get to know the country and its people: Mange Tak!

So, now I am at the end. Maybe one or the other could find himself in my thoughts, memories and feelings of experiences? Maybe you smiled a little bit, because even more important than riding a road bike is to keep a little bit of humor. Especially in such difficult times.

To conclude, once again a quote from the "Poor traveler", with the best greetings and wishes to all fellow riders, organizers and supporters!

Odd Nordstoga "Fatig ferdamann"

*Eg har gjenge grøne enger, eg har trødd i skår
Eg trur dei dømer etterkvart her, på den vegen eg går
Men, eg er ein fatig ferdamann og eg har ingen svar
Kom, set deg ned, så kviler me med sola glar*

On Youtube:

"Fatig Ferdamann": <https://youtu.be/WJY0TCJ3DhE>

"Epilogue": <https://youtu.be/SiWXUj4vHV8>

P.S. The text originally has been provided in german on my facebook profile
<https://www.facebook.com/stefan.ostendorf.5>.

Questions, comments or hints are always welcome...