

Pauline and I returned from a cruise around the Baltics States a few weeks ago. During the trip I was wheel chair bound. When I returned, I wrote the attached article, which may cause a chuckle to some people. I hope you like it.

Wheelies in the Baltic's – Bob Ashwood.

Recently Mrs A and I cruised around the Baltic States. For some reason my legs had become very painful, I thought I had pulled a muscle. I visited the Doc, who gave me some magic beans. Like so many magic beans they did not grow into stalks of pain relief, and so you find me sitting in a wheel chair, in front of the lift on the good ship 'Jewel of the Sea'.



At first sitting in a wheel chair was fun, waving my stick around, shouting “**forward**”, pointing it in the required direction, only to find that Mrs A has other ideas, very frustrating! Then there are the lifts. One sits patiently waiting for the lift to arrive, feeling quite inadequate, not being able to rush around pressing buttons, complaining about the poor contention ratio of moving lifts. Upright people talk to Pauline, I listen; and then I notice that the upright people are talking to Pauline about me. I sensed something was missing; it was me! Had I fallen out of the chair on deck 11?

The lift arrived, and the doors opened with a shoosh of a door on the star ship Enterprise.

Inside the lift, magically and with great synergy, the passengers divided like the Red sea to allow us in. The peeps in the lift are now standing around the walls, like 3D wallpaper. I am tucked neatly in the middle, my face 18 inches away from a man's groin. The lift is silent. My heart is racing; rushing water noises pass from one ear to the other. At last the doors open, (shoosh) and politely I am reversed out. Everyone smiles.

Our day in Warnemunde was eventful. Its quaint shops, sparkling water ways and cobbled streets, beckoned us.

Grumpy Bob waves his stick; shouting, “**forward**” Mrs A asks me where would I like to go? I cannot hear her, she bends down and shouts in my ear “I give her the answer, she cannot hear me, she bends down, shouts louder in my ear, “Where would you like to go?” I turn around and shout the answer. And so we move bumpily and grumpily along, shouting to each other with ever decreasing patience



Suddenly the chair stops, I am flung forward. Mrs A clings onto the back of the chair, front wheels travel over the kerb edge into oblivion, they become embedded between kerb and the road, yes you have it, in the gutter. Eventually my space travel comes to an end; my chin and nose stop three inches from the road's surface.

Sitting in a wheel chair, or pushing one, is not easy, and therefore I say, to those about to ride (or push), I salute you!