



MAJA'S VOYAGE

2014-2017

Book 1

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June-Desember 2014

Florvåg (Norway) – Vila Real de Santo Antonio (Portugal)

Cover picture taken by par Fritz on 17th of June 2015 between Messina (Sicilia) and Argostoli (Greece)

Tuesday, June 24 2014 . Florvåg-Bakkasund



Bye, bye Askøy

After a rather "busy, busy" period at home and a very friendly Sankt Hans evening, we finish our luggage and load the boat quietly today. It is a beautiful day, blue sky "Italy blue" Mom would have said, beautiful sunshine and very little wind. I bring the car home at 4 pm and Nina and Theo come and pick me up to take me to the boat. Laila, who is here to work in July at the Grieg Museum, also comes. Kristin can't come but we made our farewells yesterday. Theo (3 years) is excited to get on Maja. Nina drives to Kleppestø and Theo is with us on the boat. He says bravely goodbye to his mom and we go. He loves it. After a quarter of an hour we are in Kleppestø, his mini-cruise (and Laila's) is over. Kisses and goodbyes.

We motor quietly, finishing putting things in place and admiring the scenery. It's beautiful, blue fjord, blue sky and snowy mountains far east. We go south along the fjords. We cross Bjørnefjorden and we stop at a beautiful little harbor, Bakkasund, at 8:15 pm. Light dinner, a walk and to bed.

The project, vague and subject to change, is to go south, as the blog name suggests. We have no time limit and go where the wind pushes us. If we get that far, Jens wants to sail across the Bay of Biscay before the end of August. To be continued ...



Jeannette, Theo, Jens



Maja. Bakkasund

Florvåg-Bakkasund: 20 nautical miles (nm) (36 km)

The distance is measured from Florvåg, our home harbor on Askøy, our island. It's in nautical miles (nm) and km.

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

After a good night at Bakkasund, we leave at 10:45 am to the south. It's very nice weather, a little wind, force two to three from the southwest and sea a little "confused" because a (strong) north wind blew for a long period. Waves from the the north are still there and the new wind from the southwest made new waves. But all this is very navigable, the waves are small, but it moves a little. We go out on the open sea and go directly south. At lunch, we take a north-south fjord and eat quietly then we come out in the open sea again, move a little and re-enter a fjord ... to drink our tea in peace. Jens takes then a nap and then me. I'm a little tired and I especially want to get warm under my duvet. It's very nice but it only 13 °. We motor with the mainsail to stabilize the boat. This is very nice, everything is fine and more so as we listen old songs of Edith Piaf, that Laila gave me. If the entire trip could be like that!



Nice weather, but cold

We come to the island of Espevær at 5:45 pm, an old fishing community just north-west of Haugesund. Before, several hundred people lived here, but the number of inhabitants is 130 now. In the summer, hundreds of descendants and visitors come to spend the holidays on the island. The white houses are well maintained, there are no cars and the island is known for its mild climate and flowers, a paradise for children. A shop on the quay sells everything and the ferry leaves every hour during the day.



Espevær

A dock formed as a U has a place at the bottom of the U. Jens maneuvers expertly our Maja and a man catches our ropes. He does not speak Norwegian, he is Dutch, we guess because he goes back on a big yacht carrying the Dutch flag. We make a small walk to find the shop (5 minutes from our dock) and see the cable ferry that crosses the harbor. It is a kind of iron cage, it takes 20 kr in a slot and automatically ferries people across the harbor. It takes 4 people. We dine out on the boat in the sun. Then we make a new walk a little longer after dinner. I am quite surprised to find (small red, sanguineum) wild geraniums everywhere. They are like weeds here. It's pretty.



Geranium sanguineum

Bakkasund-Espevær: 30 nm (54 km)
Florvåg-Espevær: 20 + 30 = 50 nm (90 km)

Thursday, June 26, 2014



Parking in front of the shop

Still beautiful weather. Long walk this morning. The island of Espevær is a few miles long. We go and see the UFO ring! This is an oval ring, 26 m long where the grass looks burned. The phenomenon appeared suddenly in 1975 and no logical explanation has been found, so the inhabitants believe that aliens did it.

The Dutch couple (who are retired and cruise a lot) leave. We take their place. It will be easier to leave than at the bottom of our U.

Action, action! Jens looked at the weather forecast, and concluded that it would be best to leave today! Surprise, I thought we were leaving tomorrow for Inverness! More news in three days ...



UFO ring

Thursday, June 26 -Sunday, June 29, 2014. Espevær (Norway)-Inverness (Scotland)



Bye, bye Norway

We started at 5 pm Thursday afternoon by good weather and calm seas. On leaving the port at Espevær we saw a porpoise and a seal. I am not superstitious, but I take it as a good sign. We go out west and put a "waypoint", a destination a little before Inverness in Scotland in our autopilot, about 286 miles (457 km). Jens unfurls the mainsail (we do not hoist it, it is rolled into the mast) ... and hurts his back. Poor Jens, he will have pain all through the trip to Scotland.



Beautiful sunset. Thursday

The first night, we don't have our sea legs yet. The time passes slowly, we can't rest well and we are tired. But I didn't get seasick, hooray. The sea is quite rough, two-meter waves and little wind, from three quarter back. It is impressive to see these big waves reach, lift and move below Maja. Maja gently descends. It is a gentle movement and it keeps repeating. But Maja is rolling a lot, even with this "gentle" movement.

If we were against the wind, the movements would have been more violent and the boat would hit every wave.



The waves

The last night, we change every two hours. As soon as he hit the pillow Jens falls asleep. He sleeps like a baby the entire trip and yet he did not take any medicine, not even an aspirin. Friday 27, at 107 miles from Norway I see the first gannets, these magnificent birds and also dolphins.

At 9 pm, I make a picture of our track, we are almost half way.



We are half way. Friday 9:00 pm

We pass close to oil platforms and once a guy on a platform calls us, he finds that we are passing too close. So we change cap slightly away from the platform and it is OK.

Otherwise, we see nobody for hours and hours. The immensity of the sea is awesome as well as the feeling of loneliness. With classical music in the ears, solitude and vastness, even Jens and I, who are hardly introvert think, reflect, meditate ... it would almost make philosophers of us.

And we continue. Maja is moving a lot and we are used to having always one hand for the boat and one hand for oneself. We are motor-sailing, the wind is too weak (force 2) to give us

a proper speed. But the waves are high, it must be waves coming from afar, formed by strong wind north. We heat a can of soup on Friday evening and it seems good.

On Saturday, the sun is shining, the form is back and everything is fine except Jens' back.

Once I see a triangular shape, very far. I think it's another yacht (we did not see one since we left). But it looks more like an Eiffel Tower and it does not move. With our speed, um, quite slow (4.5-5 knots, or 8 km / h!), it takes time to approach. And yes, it is an Eiffel Tower, but a mini one.



The mini Eiffel Tower

Our dear autopilot is showing signs of weakness. He takes us to the right, to the left of our line. Fortunately, we can manually put it in one direction and it stays in this direction, no problem.

We are getting closer, slowly but surely. The wind increases and we sail without motor since Saturday morning. The wind is from the northeast, force 4-5, very well for us. I look at the chart for the arrival and a guide. Horror: it is quite clear that the harbor entrance is discouraged by strong wind from northeast! I wake Jens, the poor, and complain, he could have seen this before and provide an alternative. With my fertile imagination, I can already see the harbor entrance with terrible surf, Maja sinking and we in danger of death.

Jens, as a calm and wise man, asks to see the guide and says in a quiet tone: if you look at the right page, it would be better. I was looking at the Aberdeen page, but we're not going to Aberdeen, we are going to Inverness. Hum, hum, it happens to everyone to be wrong sometimes ...

Saturday and the night between Saturday and Sunday pass quickly. The menu is soup again on Saturday evening. We are more used to the sea-rhythm now and time flies. Inverness Bay is huge, we navigate hours to get to the bottom. A place is marked with a very strong current and we have to start calculating the time we have to pass it according to the tide, like we did in 2012. We are not used to do that in western Norway. The sun rises on Sunday, Jens is asleep and I am steering. I'm not sure where to go and a sailboat is going in the same direction as us. I think he knows where he is going and I follow him ... I wake up Jens, he puts the electronic chart to another scale and see that where we are going ... there is not enough depth! We change course, the other yacht then follows us. Whew!

We arrive at Inverness at 11:30 am (10:30 am, local time) on Sunday. It took us 66 hours and a half. We are in good shape (not Jens' back). We go to the nearest marina and eat a good lunch outside on the boat. We are happy for this good start of the journey.



Inverness Bridge. Sunday at 11:00 am (10:00 local time)

This marina is just after the bridge and is situated in an industrial zone, not too pretty. After lunch, we ride our bikes downtown. It is Sunday but many shops are open. The center is animated. Back on Maja, we take a good shower and wash clothes. After us, a yacht came in the marina, Robusta. It is the boat I was following and which was going to shallow waters. She is from Switzerland! Conclusion: don't trust Swiss mariners. (PS The best friends we met during this trip are Swiss and very good sailors!)

And, after a light dinner, we go to bed early.



I raise the Scottish guest flag

Espevær (N)-Inverness (Scotland): 293 nm (527 km)

Florvåg-Inverness: $50 + 293 = 343$ nm (617 km)

Monday, June 30, 2014. Inverness



The Danish, the Norwegian, the Swedish and the English

Gray and rainy today. There are four boats going to the canal so we leave together. The lock keeper opens the first lock at noon. Leaving the marina we must make a big detour, direct access dries. We have good speed, the current is strong. It's funny: one boat is English, one Swedish, one Danish and finally one Norwegian (us), Scandinavia is well represented. The lock keeper is very friendly. It's raining now. Everything is going well and we stop at the marina where we said good bye to Petter and Kirsten in 2012. We did 1.6 nautical mile. Not too long today.

Lunch inside, it's raining. Then the sun reappears and we walk to go shopping: first, things for the boat at a chandler nearby and at Coop where we shopped together Petter, Kirsten and me in 2012, the last day we were together.

Along the canal, we are witnessing a rescue operation ... of a mother duck and her three ducklings. She found herself trapped in a basin lock (the lock we take tomorrow) and the lock keeper wants to help her. He raises the water level by opening the door and he "pushes" her upstream, he says that's where she comes from. When we go back, a quarter of an hour later, he announces proudly that the operation was a success. The duck family is reunited, upstream of the lock. A nice lock keeper.

After dinner, we go for a walk. We walk along the canal, back the way we came today with Maja. We reach the first lock, cross on the pedestrian bridge and walk back on the other bank. A poster announces "Titanic Museum", we are curious to see it. We come closer and see a large model (20 m) of the Titanic. The poor vessel is almost in as bad a shape as the original, covered with weeds and dry leaves. But what a work.



The Titanic

Tuesday, July 1st. Fort Augustus (on the Caledonian canal)

Jens buys fresh rolls at Coop. At 9 am we buy diesel at the marina. We used only half the tank because we did a lot of sailing when we came from Norway. The highway bridge just after the marina opens at 9:20 am, not to interfere too much with early car traffic. We pass the bridge and another boat follows us. After the bridge, we climb five locks, one after another, like a staircase. We pull Maja, Jens and I from lock to lock. This time, we're both Volga boatmen. This is fine. We continue and cross a family of swans. Mom and Dad carry their young on their backs!



Stop for lunch

After a lock, we stop for lunch at a pontoon. We make a stroll and admire a beautiful garden. The old lady who lives there must spend hours and hours in her garden. She even has three turtles ... she had had them for 43 years! She thinks they are over hundred years old. In winter, the turtles hibernate in a fridge reserved for this purpose.



The lady with the turtles

We then enter the dreaded Loch Ness. We stop the engine and sail, with our "gennaker", a hybrid between a genoa (a big jib) and spinnaker (sail ball with pretty colors).



Sailing on the Loch Ness

The weather is very beautiful and it feels (almost) like the Mediterranean. The monster does not deign to show himself. The wind forces so we take down the gennaker and hoist the jib. The sun is hiding and it starts to rain. In an hour we pass from a sunny and relatively warm weather to cold, rainy and gray weather.

We arrive at Fort Augustus, the town which is the capital of Loch Ness. Nessy is omnipresent. There are many tourists. In winter the village has 400 inhabitants. We have dinner in a small

restaurant and take a walk after dinner. Now it is sunny again but a neighbor announces us bad weather for tomorrow. We do not follow the weather forecast so closely when we are on a canal. We'll see.



Fort Augustus

Inverness-Fort Augustus : 22 nm (40 km)

Florvåg-Fort Augustus : $343 + 22 = 365$ nm (657 km)

Wednesday, July 2, 2014. Laggan

The weather is nice, but it is blowing a very strong wind. The lock was supposed to open at 9:20 am but several boats are going down and we who are going up must wait. The lock keeper talks to each captain that will pass the lock and explains where each will go in the lock and how to moor. And we enter the first lock. It does not feel as windy in the lock. We are 6 boats. Jens and I are both on the ground and draw Maja from lock to lock. We go up 5 locks, it is like big stairs. The lady on a Norwegian yacht that goes into the lock at the same time as us, tells us that she knows well Jan-Otto, Maja's first owner!



In a lock. We go up. Caledonian Canal



We go up

Climbing the five locks takes us over 1 h and 30 minutes, then we continue. We pass the Loch Oich. The wind is even stronger now, we have gusts at 17 m / s (force 7-8!).



On the Loch Oich. It's really blowing

We have it right in the nose but on the loch the waves are small. Fortunately, we are not at sea! And now it's raining. We recognize the "castle"" where we had our "morning tea" in 2012. We stop a little further; the next lock is closed at lunch time so we also have lunch. We continue, bridges, locks, and arrive at Laggan where we stopped also in 2012. The barge- pub is still there but it is closed. The rain stops. We take a long walk along the canal. It is cold and heating in Maja is appreciated when we come back. Light dinner, salad, bread and cheese. The Norwegian lady invites us to have a drink after dinner. So we go on their boat, a Naiad 44 feet (Maja is 30 feet). This is a beautiful boat. Torunn and Øyvind are from Bergen and know Jan-Otto, Dr. Leer (our family doctor) and Svein Aaland, a good friend of Jens at the boat club. They explain the origin of the name "Maja". Jan-Otto's first wife had a name that started with Ma and his name starts with JA so they took their first two syllables MA + JA together and it became Maja. We spend a great time together with Torunn and Øyvind. Their plan is to sail to Orkney and Shetland .

Fort Augustus-Laggan : 12 nm (22 km)
Florvåg-Laggan : 365 + 12 = 377 nm (679 km)



Oyvind and Torunn

Thursday, July 3, 2014. Corpath (end of the Caledonian Canal)

We start at 8:30 am and now we're going down. If there is only one lock, we stay on the boat and when we get down, a lock keeper takes our two ropes out of the hooks on land and throws them onto the boat. If there are several locks, we can go ashore and pull Maja from lock to lock but we must remember to come back on the boat before the last lock. Otherwise, at the last lock, Maja is down (several meters down), we up and there is no way to go down.

We start to go down and Jens, always social, is chatting with the neighbor ... and forgets to let the rope go! It is so tense when he realizes it, that he can't undo the knot and is forced to cut it with his Swiss Army knife (the same as MacGyver). After that everything goes well, the weather is not too bad but still very windy.

The last set of locks before the end of the Caledonian Canal is called Neptune Stairs, a group of five locks. Torunn and Øyvind decide to go down "the stairs" today, but we prefer to stop at the top. There are pontoons before the locks to wait or spend the night.

After lunch, we ride to Fort William, about 6 km away. Nice ride on bike paths and small roads. At Fort William we take a coffee and a tea. The main street is pedestrian and from the café we can observe the pedestrians; many tourists are from southern Europe, Italy, Spain ... They come here to cool down, I think.

Mount Ben Nevis, the highest point of Scotland (1343 m) is hidden in the clouds.

We return, dine and invite Torunn and Øyvind for a drink in a pub which is just in front of their pontoon. Although they are five locks down and we are up, we are separated by only a few hundred meters. The men take a pint and the ladies ... a small glass of white wine. Another good evening with these new friends.



Fort William

Laggan-Corpath: 14 nm (25 km)

Florvåg-Corpath: $377 + 14 = 391$ nm (703 km)

Friday, July 4, 2014. Dunstaffnage (a little north of Oban)

What a weather! It's pouring and a strong wind is blowing. And we have to go down the Neptune stairs, five locks one after another. So we put on our rain gear and rubber boots and let's go. We start at 8 am and it takes us 3 hours. But it is quite social, people talking to each other. We discuss on the quay with our "neighbors," a yacht from the Shetland. Jens and I hold Maja well and let slip the ropes gradually as she goes down. Then we pull her to the next lock and we start again. Everyone is soaked and dripping, but it's not cold. The Shetland family, parents and an adult son, are from Collivoe on the island of Yell. It is from this village that we left for the Faroe Islands in 2011.



"White Lady" from the Shetland

After five locks, two bridges open and we pass the last lock, then we are in a large fjord. We give back the key for the toilets, we almost forgot. Torunn and Øyvind go out first and disappear quickly, they are faster than us. White Lady, the Shetland boat, stops to take diesel and will leave later. Everyone is motoring, the wind is right against us and strong, a good force 5. The first part of the fjord (or rather loch) is pretty quiet. We make a nice cup of tea. We pass a very narrow place, Corran Narrows, where there is strong current, but that's okay. But after that ... we have waves, short and close, right in the nose.



Waves

Poor Maja is dancing like a crazy camel. She rides on a wave and falls into the next hole, and this hundreds of times! The waves stop her and we're not going fast. We did not anticipate these movements and I must quickly tie everything else there will be broken crockery. It is quite unpleasant but not dangerous, the boat is coping well. At one point, Øyvind calls us on the radio to tell us that further on the fjord, it gets better. It's nice. And it's true, there are fewer waves further and, in addition, the wind drops. In a quarter of an hour the wind passes from force 5 (a good five) to a small force 3. The rain stops and the sun comes out. We stop just before Oban, at a large marina, Dunstaffnage. In preparing the ropes for mooring, I make a big hole in my (old) pants. I am hardly presentable in this marina which seems a little fancy.



Elegance de Paris

We go for a walk and do some shopping at the village shop. Then dinner on the boat, outside, in the sun, but with a sweater, it is a little bit cold. As we finish dinner, we see White Lady coming inn. They left about two hours after us and did not have waves at all, lucky people. We go and visit them after dinner, they invite us for a drink and we spend a good time together.

Corpath-Dunstaffnage : 28 nm (50 km)

Florvåg- Dunstaffnage: $391 + 28 = 419$ nm (754 km)

Saturday, July 5, 2014. Crinan

Jens has calculated we must leave at 11 am to have the current with us. The people from White Lady (Shetland) come to visit us, we show them Maja and we drink a cup of (Turkish) tea together. We sympathize well.



Andrew, Linsey and their son, Barry from the Shetland

PS We visited them in July 2019 with Maja

At 11 am we leave. Several boats leave too, is a good sign. The weather is nice, little wind. The beginning is very quiet, we are motoring. We pass Oban, where we stopped two years ago. We were at the marina on an island in front of Oban. We continue and arrive in an area with very strong currents. On the map, there are even symbols for dangerous whirlpools. But today, there is no danger, there is little current and small waves. But we feel it, water bubbles and Maja goes over 10 knots. We arrive at Crinan at 3:40 pm. We have to wait 15 minutes before going into the lock where we are with a sailboat from Switzerland. We climb a lock and decide to spend the night in the basin at Crinan. We have coffee on the dock and then we'll take a walk along the canal and back through the forest. The evening is calm and sunny. Last time we were here, with Petter and Kirsten, it was raining.



Strong currant



The Crinan Canal entrance

Dunstaffnage-Crinan Canal : 26 nm (46 km)
Florvag-Crinan Canal : $419 + 26 = 445$ nm (801 km)

Sunday, July 6, 2014. Ardrishaig (end of the Crinan Canal)

A new sunny day. After taking a shower, we leave at 8:45 am, two boats are with us in the first lock, a Norwegian and a Swiss. It is a little tight but with fenders everywhere it is OK. The Crinan Canal is only 15 km long but it has 15 locks that we must operate ourselves. So we don't have time to get bored. Everything is smaller than on the Caledonian Canal: it is narrower, shallower and the locks are smaller. But it is very pretty, more bucolic.

A sign announces a bridge and it says you need to honk for the bridge to open. Jens is proud to use his foghorn (I do not know if the horn is called that, but it sounds real maritime) and the bridge opens.



The Crinan Canal

At the second lock, a boat is going down and we must wait. We moor at a pontoon all three and wait. A guy tells us that he is waiting to go up too, and that, unfortunately, his yacht is so large that she will occupy all the space in the lock and that the three of us will have to wait another turn. But Jens and the Norwegian protest, this is not true. They find a compromise: the Swiss yacht will go with him and we, the two Norwegians, will wait. Good solution.



Ellida 6 and Maja

Ellida 6 (the Norwegian boat) and we pass all the locks together, except the last one. At the first lock where we go together, Ellida 6, which is a big yacht (44 feet), comes first and we second. But it is really tight. So we changed tactics: the next lock, we go first and then her, and it is much better. It works very well and they have a volunteer who opens and closes doors and filled the basins. When we are up a lock Jens can go ashore and helps him. But it is

hard work, even for me who don't push door (except once for a photo!). We nibble a sandwich under the way, quickly, between two locks. Time flies. It's Sunday and people walk or ride bikes on the towpath.



I'm pushing ... but it is just for the picture

Ellida 6 wants to go out of the channel and continue to Tarbert, two hours south. We are going to spend the night in the last canal basin, Ardrishaig. The Swiss, we meet again in the last lock, too. When Ellida 6 passes on her way out, we wish them good luck, we had excellent cooperation with them.



Ardishaig

It is only 3:30 pm, but we feel tired. The Swiss, when asked whether he will continue, answered that he is hungry, thirsty and he has had enough for today. But they have a problem: they have no more beer so we invite them to share our "ankerdram". (ankerdram means the little glass we drink to celebrate anchoring or arriving in a harbor) Jens goes shopping while I write the blog, at a small Coop which is open then prepares us a nice dinner. We are tired. A short walk and in bed at 10:30 pm.

For the first time, I start writing this blog on Monday, July 7, between Ardrishaig and Campbeltown. It's pretty quiet and the boat is moving just a little, I can write without being seasick.

Crinan Canal-Ardrishaig: 6 nm (11 km)
Florvåg-Ardrishaig : $445 + 6 = 451$ nm (812 km)

Monday, July 7, 2014. Ardrishaig-Campbeltown

Showers and clear spells, light wind from southwest. We take breakfast at a cafe. You can take the "full English breakfast": eggs, bacon, sausages, black pudding and beans (!). But we stick to lighter eggs and toast. The cafe is very cozy and apparently popular with buses and trucks' drivers. They come to buy their breakfast and take it away.



Breakfast in Ardrishaig

We are ready early, but a boat entering the canal takes a long time. We wait more than one hour before leaving. The Swiss leaves also and we have a parallel course. But then they take another fjord, wider and farther east. They don't want to take the same fjord as us, narrower and therefore with more current. But today, with the weak wind and a low coefficient, there is no problem. We are motoring and it is very quiet all along, I can even write the blog for yesterday.



I am writing the blog underway

We leave at 11 am and arrive at Campbeltown exactly at 6:00 pm. We take almost the same place at the pontoon than in 2012. Other yachts arrive after us and soon the pontoon is full. Small walk in town, we recognize the city, we passed here coming back from France in September 2012. A Norwegian cargo ship from Bergen is in the harbor.



Maja. Campbeltown

We dine at the Royal Hotel, Jens takes a traditional Scottish dish of breaded haddock in a beer batter and I took the lamb. But when the waitress brings the fish to Jens, she asks who has ordered the "fish and chips". And it is true that despite the fancy name, it's just fish and chips. After dinner we take a long walk along the bay. Campbeltown is at the bottom of a bay, well protected and a beautiful promenade follows the bay.



Campbeltown at nightfall

It is not cold and it is not raining. Large and beautiful houses are along the sea while in town small houses look much poorer, many shops are closed and the houses and buildings are gray, gray.

Ardrishaig-Campbeltown : 42 nm (75 km)

Florvåg-Campbeltown : $451 + 42 = 493$ nm (887 km)

Tuesday, July 8. Campbeltown-?

It has been raining all night and all this morning but now it is sunny. We leave at 3:00 pm to have the current with us. We are going south. We will try to make a long leg. The weather forecast is good, light to moderate wind from the north.

We will be in touch later on.

Wednesday, July 9, 2014. Dublin

Just a word to say that we arrived safely today, Wednesday, at Dublin at 6 pm. We left Campbeltown at 2 pm yesterday, which means we have sailed 28 h. More details tomorrow.



A gannet

From Tuesday, July 8 to Wednesday, July 9. Campbeltown (Scotland) to Dublin (Ireland)

Tuesday at Campbeltown, Jens went to a laundry to wash clothes, went shopping (lots of food for the trip: nuts, yogurt, soups ...) and together we went to fill up with diesel.



Filling up the diesel tank

The pump is usually used by large ships, we felt small down this high dock. I wrote the blog for Monday. It was raining heavily and the city, all gray, was not very engaging. I went to buy new pants, first in a Red Cross shop (used clothes) but I didn't find my size and then to the "Factory Shop", a kind of Sparkjøp, cheap shop. I bought beautiful jeans for 12 pounds (120 kr or 15 €). We went for a short walk in Campbeltown, it is sunny now, then we eat a good lunch and left at 2 pm.



Campbeltown lighthouse

We passed the Campbeltown lighthouse which had so comforted us in 2012 after a long voyage, the Scillies Islands (south-west of England) to Campbeltown (65 hours, I think). At the start it is very quiet in the Bay and on the Firth of Clyde, the great "fjord" which leads us to the northern Irish Sea. It leads to the North Channel, the narrow place where the Atlantic "enters" the Irish Sea. It is a place known for its strong currents, hence the importance of timing it right with the tide. The wind blows from the northwest, quite variable, between force 2 and 4, sometimes 5. The weather forecast announced peaks at force 6, I do not like that very much, but in fact we had only rarely 6 and for very short moments. The waves are short, and for me they seem more "evil" than the big waves of the North Sea. Maja and Jens are going well, but I do not feel very comfortable. In addition, Jens told me that the rope that connects the mainsail to the boom is a bit broken. Perhaps this is the combination of all this, but I'm afraid and have a kind of panic attack. Not funny. I know that there is no danger, I repeat: "Maja is doing well, Maja is doing well" but that does not help. I am cold, trembling, tense etc and I go to lie down in my "hole". And it lasts a long time. Jens heats a can of soup but I am not hungry. At the end I fall asleep. At 10 pm, I wake up and take a pill against seasickness, it helps, I relax a bit and can resume my post. Jens has been at the wheel alone from 2 pm to 11:30 pm, now I must go back to work. We are further south, the wind has dropped and the waves are smaller. But we have the current against us and we are not moving fast. We sail when there is enough wind and just start the engine (keeping the sails up) when the wind drops. The night passes quietly. We pass along the coast of Ireland and clearly see the lights of Belfast and, in addition, we have a beautiful moonlight.



Beautiful moon and Belfast lights



Nice sea



Land!



My job: to raise the Irish courtesy flag

Nice navigation on Wednesday. We can get a real breakfast, tea and knekkebrød (crispbread). It is beautiful, the sea is calm and we are doing well. I have regained my calm. We arrive at the entrance of the Dublin bay at 4 pm but we have to navigate at least 1 h and 30 minutes to reach the marina at the bottom of the bay. A channel is reserved for large ships and pleasure boats must not use it but follow it a little south. As we come from the north, it is necessary to cross this channel. The traffic is dense. We have to cross at a quiet moment between large vessels and we cross without problem.



Busy traffic

We recognize the two tall chimneys which were our marks when we went by bike. The port is busy; Ireland being an island a lot of goods are arriving by ship. The marina is at the bottom of the harbor on one side of the last basin. On the other side of the basin, we see a constant traffic of containers-ships and ferries.

We reach the marina "Poolbeg Yacht and Boat Club" at 6 pm. It seems full, but the "Commodore" (the head of the marina) tells us that there is a place inside. He is expecting us, takes our ropes and wishes us welcome. Two minutes later a "gentleman" comes also to welcome us, the man who took us in his car to Howth in July 2012 to buy equipment. Many people recognize us and say hello. We register at the bar-reception and another gentleman offers safely us a ... Guinness, of course. Very friendly welcome.



The bar-reception

Stroll through the village of Ringsend (which is now part of Dublin). We see again all the small terraced houses along the harbor. We go through the park and are surprised to see so many people out. It's nice and warm enough, 21 °.

We are very tired and the walk is short. I write two lines on the blog to say that we have arrived at Dublin. Diner on Maja outside on the sun, after that an old Maigret for Jens and a sudoku for me, but at 10 pm, we can't stay awake anymore and we go to bed.



Maja. Dublin

Campbeltown-Dublin : 128 nm (230 km)

Florvåg-Dublin : $493 + 128 = 621$ nm (1 117 km)

Thursday, July 10, 2014. Dublin

I fell asleep at 10 pm last night and woke up at 7 am this morning, Jens woke up a little earlier. A good night's sleep feels good. It is quite sunny and we stay in the boat. First we read each our newspaper, The Guardian for Jens and The Irish Time for me. The biggest scandal here is that an American singer, Garth Brooks, had planned to give five concerts in Dublin and that the municipality gave him permission for three concerts only. So he cancels everything. 400,000 people have already bought tickets and it is now a big mess. So Jens tinkers and fixes things and I write a long blog. The marina now has a washing machine and a dryer. So I want to do a laundry and a lady helps me. She puts (a lot) of detergent in the machine. The machine registers the right temperature but programs a washing time of 4 hours 40 minutes! The lady tries all buttons, unplug the machine and reconnect it. At one point she goes to fetch a key to open the electric meter and while she is away I remove some of the detergent. She does something in the electric meter and tells me that it will work, the laundry will last 1 hour 30 minutes. OK. After 1 h 30 I come back to see. The lady is not here, a man is in charge now. He opens the little shelter where the machine ... is still washing. And it will wash like that for 4 hours 40! The clothes are going to be clean. He says that, after all the problems, I don't need to pay. I want to pay, the laundry will consume a lot of electricity, but nothing to do. No problem with the drying. We have lunch on the boat and are ready to go for a bike ride in Dublin, but it starts to rain very hard. We take refuge in the bar to wait a bit to see if it will pass. We take an orange juice and watch the Tour de France on TV (without sound). After a while, we decide to leave, the rain does not stop. We put on our rain gear and off we go. Dublin is shining ... with all this rain. People are hardly equipped, they are soaked. Some have umbrellas but none are like us, with rain cloth. Fortunately it is not cold. We pass the River Liffey, turn left and arrive at the center, find the "Spire", the high needle on the corner of O'Connell Street and Henry Street.



Liffey River. Dublin

We walk in the pedestrian streets, but the atmosphere is not the same in the pouring rain than in sunshine. It's raining and raining. We take shelter under an awning to consult a map when an old man comes right next to us, puts a cap on the floor and starts playing the flute. I know

that melody, but from where? I hum a little the music and the old man then addresses us in French and tells me that this song was called "Blue, blue, my heart is blue" and won the Eurovision for France in 1964 (he believes). 1964! And I remember it!



The Needle

We returned, soaked, especially the feet, we did not put on rubberboots. And the rain stops. We change cloth and shoes and go for dinner at a Chinese restaurant in a new area, behind the marina. The dish of the day is "beef belly" with rice or noodles for 6 € 50. Jens sees only beef but I see especially belly. Belly, I understand it is tripe (in French). But it is very good and we like it. In front of the restaurant, there is a station for "Dublinbikes" the local Vélibs. These bikes are very popular, people take them and put them back constantly. This is a great success. The waitress of the restaurant tells us that she is using one to come to work. She pays 20 € per year and every time she takes one, the first half hour is free. There are many stations spread throughout the city, even here where we are a little outside downtown. An employee of the restaurant is using one to deliver meals. We go home, it's late, little reading and we blow our candles (figuratively).

Friday, July 11, 2014. Dublin

The weather is better today. At the club, a group of women is doing weight training: they are training for a rowing competition.

We start cycling at 10:30 am to Howth, 15 km from here on a beautiful bike path along the bay.



Good bike path

Many tourists visit Howth, it is a lovely seaside resort and fishing port. We eat fish and chips in a kind of caravan that has still, God only knows why, the Brazilian flag hoisted above his roof. On returning we take a ride on Bull Island, this island recovered from the sea in the nineteenth century. We look at the beaches (we have our swimming suits in the bag), but it is low tide and it is not very engaging, and I think the water is cold.

We come back at 4 pm, tired and thirsty. Rest and a quiet dinner of salad and cheese.

We often hear Gaelic spoken, even young people speak it, apparently the language is alive and well.



Howth



We take a fish and chips here.



The small houses along the harbor

Saturday, July 12. Dublin-?

We are leaving this afternoon toward south. The wind is turning north, that is good for us.
See you later

Sunday, July 13, 2014. Milford Haven

We are now in Milford Haven in Wales. Long crossing, 120 nautical miles (216 km), quite turbulent.

We left Dublin at 4:30 pm on Saturday and arrived here on Sunday at 4:30 pm. Exactly 24 hours.

Now it is 7 pm, I am tired and I will write more tomorrow.
Everything is OK.

Saturday, July 12/Sunday, July 13, 2014. Dublin (Ireland)- Milford Haven (Wales)

The weather forecast (and the current) make us leave at 4:30 pm.

It's funny, in the newspaper today, there is an article about the two big chimneys: to destroy or to keep them.

We take a ride into town in the morning each of us on our own and we meet at 1 pm at the Spire, the big needle on O'Connel street. It's Saturday, the streets are busy and the city is very much alive.

We have lunch at the same little cafe where we had lunch in July 2012. Nostalgia, nostalgia. I like their lunch of soup and sandwich. We see again ladies selling fruit from pram and running away when the police comes.



The ladies selling fruit

We return to the boat, prepare everything and leave at 4:30 pm.



Bye, bye Dublin. The two chimneys overthere

In the harbor, there is no wind at all. Jens has calculated that we have the current against us at the beginning but then with us, then against us again and so on, the currents change every 6 hours. He has watched the waves map, and no, there are no waves ... The wind is from southwest at the start and is going to turn north or northwest in the late evening. Good. But things didn't happen quite as planned. There is little wind, but the waves are short, "evil" (again) and against us. They are very small, between 50 cm and one meter, but it's enough to make life difficult for us. Maja begins to cavort like a crazy camel and doesn't advance much. We gain some ground but very slowly, we do 11 miles (20 km) in 3 hours. We nibble, tonight's menu was a soup, but it is moving too much, no soup now.

A little south, we pass along two very large sandbar orientated north-south. They are well marked by buoys. We follow the first inside, between the land (Ireland) and the sandbar. But that takes us go too far south-east, so Jens decides to pass between the two sandbars, towards west and re-center us in the Irish Sea. A relatively wide passageway permits it, at least one mile (1800 meters) wide. But the currents are apparently meeting here. This is really a witch pot, very turbulent. Fortunately it lasts maybe ten minutes, but these ten minutes seem long. I am, of course, in my hole, and do not like it very much (nice way to say that I hate it!). The wind turns later and we can hoist the sails. This helps a little. We change every two hours and the radio helps pass the time. One station has beautiful songs, but everything is in Gaelic. We now navigate where the sea is deeper and it moves a little less.



Moonshine

At around 3 am, at the end of my shift, an attack of seasickness takes me by surprise. Jens takes the helm and I go to bed a little earlier than expected. I take a sea-sick pill and keep it only a little. Jens advises me to take another one, it certainly did not have time to work. But then I'm like drugged! I think I "benefit" from two pills. I fall asleep and sleep for three hours, wake up and find it very difficult to go to toilettes. I wobble, move very slowly, speak with difficulty. Jens makes a cup of tea, but I am neither hungry nor thirsty. I fall asleep again. I spend almost all Sunday morning like a zombie. Jens makes a cup of tea again around noon, and then I can enjoy it.

We come off the large bay of Milford Haven. Again, the currents are strong. By strong westerly wind (that we do not have, thanks God), the entrance to the bay is called a washing

machine. We make a wide detour off Cape Saint Ann's head and turn into the bay. It moves, but much less than before. Milford Haven is very industrial, refinery and large oil tankers.



I raise the courtesy flag



Milford haven is an industrial harbor

In the bay, finally, Maja behaves calmly. I raise the English courtesy flag. A little further in the bay, a marina is accessed via a lock. Jens calls the lock keeper and he will open the lock at 6 pm. It is now almost 5 pm. We therefore tie us along a pontoon that is for the waiting yachts, waiting for the opening of the lock. Another yacht is waiting too. When we want to start, the starter does not work. Jens tickles something in the engine and it starts. The lock opens at 6 pm and remains open two hours, when the tide is almost at its highest. The marina (and the harbort) fill up with sea water and then the doors close.



We are waiting for the lock to open

Milford Haven was a great busy port. But now much of the port is occupied by a large marina. Fairly recent buildings made of bricks were built around the port. But the first impression is the calm. Nobody is walking, we see nobody on the boats. It is a little dead. But the weather is nice. We moor at the marina at 6:30 pm. So we have spent 26 hours to come from Dublin, 26 hours where Maja danced all the time, in one direction (forward-backward) or the other (rolled left to right and back). A phrase trotted in my head this whole passage: "What the hell was she doing in that galley?" (The Miser, Molière).

We are very tired, Jens because he steered a long time, me because I have been "drugged" and both of us because of these constant movements of waves in all directions. A turbulent journey, literally.

Dinner and to bed at 10 pm. No football final for us.



Milford Haven Marina

Dublin-Milford Haven: 120 nm (216 km)

Florvåg-Milford Haven: $621 + 120 = 741$ nm (1 333 km)

Monday, July 14, 2014. Milford Haven

It's gray, it's raining and there is nobody in the marina. We read the newspaper and then I do the blog for yesterday. Jens takes his bike to explore the city, Milford Haven. He returns with maps of bike trails and paths. We rest in the morning, have lunch and go on bike eastward along the estuary. We take small roads between hedges. A French flag, in a garden, catches my eye.



July 14. Vive la France!



A small road

It is very hilly and the roads are up and down, quite steep. We reach Neyland, a small estuary that empties into the largest estuary. Another marina is installed there, but much more "in the middle of nowhere" than ours. At least we are in town and can go shopping easily. We have coffee (Jens) and tea (me). At another table a couple of grandparents have their little grandson

with them, he is about three years old, a very smiling little boy, I think of Theo and I miss him.



The other marina

We ride back, we did twenty kilometers. Back in the city, we go and I see the film program, a small outing would be appreciated. But we are not impressed by both movies played tonight: Jersey Boys (a musical) and Grace of Monaco (which has bad reviews). So after dinner, instead of going to the movies, we go for a walk along the estuary in town. The weather improved and we see a nice part of Milford Haven, a beautiful promenade with many flowers along the coast.



Our trail Florvåg-Milford Haven

Tuesday, July 15, 2014. Milford Haven

Finally a nice summer day! We have waited a long time for it.

We see a few more people on the promenade along the marina, but it is not the big crowd. All along this promenade, various shops, cafes and restaurants are installed but they do not seem to have many customers.

We start cycling at 10:45 am under a bright sun. We go to Dale, a village to the west, on the edge of the estuary. Like yesterday (east) the landscape is hilly and green, it goes up and down, quite steep. Good exercise. We pass a chicken farm, they look happy. Large sheds are open and they can go out and come in as they want. We note unpronounceable welsh names on the signs. How to pronounce a word that starts with five consonants? Another name that seems straight out of the Old Testament is "Ishmaels". It sounds more Hebrew than Welsh.



How to pronounce a word starting with 5 consonants?



Ishmaels

We stop at a beautiful old house with flowers to take a photo. I had not seen that the owner was in his garden. He smiles so I asked if it is OK to take a photo. No problem, even more he invites us to see his garden and offers us a cup of tea. Brian, that's his name, is a native from

Wales but lived over thirty years in Devon. Retired, he bought this house here. The house has been well maintained but the garden was abandoned for over ten years. It is very large and it's a real jungle. Brian has begun to work to make it nice again. What a work!



Brian's house



Jens, Brian

For the first time in my life, in the kitchen, I see an Aga stove. I have often read that name in English novels. Cold heroines warm themselves near the Aga, cook puts a chicken to roast in the Aga ... Brian does not use it, but keeps it.

We tell him we're going to Dale and he tells us a shortcut when we go back the stepping stones, passable only at low tide, which avoids a long detour around a small estuary.

We thank him and invite him for dinner tonight on Maja. A little further, we hide behind a hedge and we change, it's too hot in blue jeans.

This part of the coast is very pretty, fewer houses without character and gray that damage the landscape. We arrive at Dale, which is an old Viking name meaning valley. Not far from Bergen a small town is also called Dale. The Dale here is pretty and quite lively. But here too the sea recedes very far.



Dale. The sea is far away



Sandwich and ice-cream

We are hungry and take a sandwich and an ice cream at a small café. And we begin our return. We turn and go down to Sandy Haven, where we can cross a small river on the "stepping stones". The tide is low so it is a good time to pass. This saves us several km.



The stepping stones

We are back at Maja at 4:30 pm, a little tired, we did between 35 and 40 km today. A little rest, and then shopping and cooking for Jens and blog for me. Jens is a very good husband. The sailboat near us is going out, I chat with the old couple, they are very friendly. They go out to sail two hours, the evening is so beautiful.

Brian arrives at 7:30 pm with a bouquet of flowers. We spend a nice evening together and we eat lamb chops, new potatoes and green beans. He worked for Customs and his job was to control the importation of animals (birds, reptiles, dogs, cats, lions ...) at Heathrow airport. He tells us funny episodes from this period. When the old couple on the neighbor yacht comes back after two hours, we invite them to have a drink too.

A good day, good weather, nice bike ride and interesting encounters with nice people.



Brian ...



and our neighbors

Wednesday, July 16, 2014. Milford Haven

It's raining, it's gray and no one is to be seen in the marina. We stay inside, newspapers, blog and lunch. In the afternoon, the weather improves and we go for a walk. We walk on a "beach" and I find many pieces of broken glass polished by the sea, there are so many that I take only the smaller only.

A man who lives on his boat shows us, on the map, a nice little harbor to the south. He also said that at times, Scilly harbor is full and that there is no more space. So we decide to go to Padstow, this small harbor, about 145 km south. The problem is that it is a harbor with a gate which opens 2 hours before high tide and stays open for four hours. And here at Milford Haven we have to leave when the lock is open. We must therefore coordinate all this. The gentleman says that this is feasible with an average speed of five knots, a speed we can do, in principle. It is 15-16 hours of navigation. If we start at 8:30 am tomorrow morning (when the lock opens here) we must arrive between 8 pm and midnight tomorrow night (when the gate is open at Padstow harbor).

We dine at Pembroke Yacht Club, three miles from here, cycling, taking a really narrow and steep shortcut. Optimistic and other small dinghies are training in the bay.



Sailing dinghies in the bay



Maja's twin

Thursday, July 17, 2014. Milford Haven-Padstow



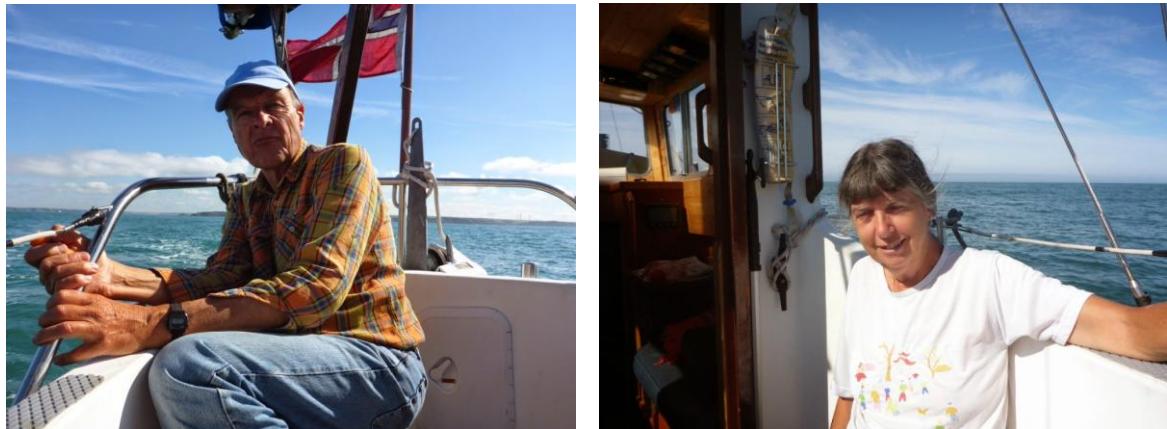
Bye, bye Milford Haven

We leave at 8:30 am when the lock opens, just behind a fishing boat. The weather is nice, little wind that is going to turn east and force a little later. At the end of the estuary, a boat from the port authorities calls us by radio. He asks us where we are going. Jens answers Padstow. He warns us that a certain area is now used as a firing training range and advises us not to go near. But that does not bother us, we just go a little further west before turning south. We are doing well, motoring, the sea is beautiful. At around 11 am, we cross a fog bank, but it does not last long. Dolphins are entertaining us several times. I even see a mom and her baby pass under the boat.



Dolphins

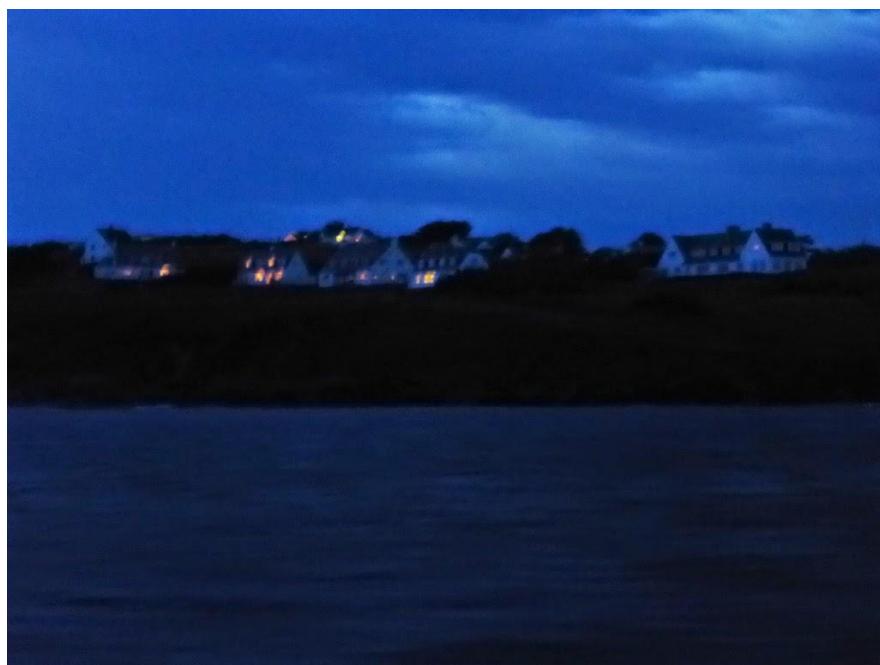
We eat a good lunch and I made a little nap in the afternoon. Jens takes one later, the good life. The BBC has very interesting programs that make the time pass.



Jens, Jeannette

The wind becomes stronger a bit and we set sail but keep the engine too. Jens stops the engine a moment to check the oil and it does not restart! Jens tickles something and it restarts. Phew. At around 8 pm the sky turns black and the wind goes up to force 5. It is good that we are almost there. We have the sails up, but we don't stop the engine, we are afraid it will not start again when we'll need it to enter the harbor. Thunder and lightning are starting too. Dramatic enough arrival at Padstow at 10 pm under lightning. No problem. The channel is well marked with lighted buoys red and green and the port gate is open. We are happy to arrive! We have to raft on another boat. The two men on the neighbor boat help us to tie Maja safely. We are three parallel boats and we all have land lines too. We are lucky enough to do all that when the rain has stopped. When we are finished, it starts to rain again.

A good cup of tea with knekkebrød restores us. The port looks very pretty, a real fishing port, but we will see better tomorrow, it is dark now.



Arrival at Padstow

Milford Haven- Padstow : 80 nm (144 km)
Florvåg-Padstow : $741 + 80 = 821$ nm (1 478 km)

This crossing cheers me up, all went well, the sea was beautiful, the waves "not evil" and even the thunder and the wind squalls on arrival did not scare me. Maja continued, unperturbable. A very good crossing of 13 hours and 30 minutes.

Friday, July 18, 2014. Padstow

Calm day at Padstow, beautiful harbor, quite touristic. It is amazing to see how the sea is far away at low tide. The channel by which we arrived is, at low tide, very narrow and shallow, we could not use it.



The channel we used yesterday at low water



Padstow

The harbor gate keeps water in the basin, even at low tide. When the level inside and outside

is the same, the gate (and the gateway with it) rotates and gets to the bottom. After a few minutes the boats can pass.



The chicken

We walk, go shopping and I cook a chicken in the oven surrounded by ratatouille vegetables. For once, I am cooking, I finished the blog this morning. This is very good. After dinner our two neighbors come for a drink. They return from a tour of England with their old boat (50 years). Good evening.



Our neighbors

We leave tomorrow for the long crossing over the Biscay Bay!

Saturday, July 19, 2014. Padstow-?

Good weather forecast for seven days. We are leaving from here directly to Spain. We leave at 10 am.

We plan to sail at least four days, our longest crossing so far.

We filled up diesel (200 l), water and food. Moral Ok, nice weather.

See you soon



Padstow harbor

Wednesday, July 23, 2014

We have arrived at Ares near La Coruña in Galicia, north-west Spain.

We did 443 nautical miles or 797 km in 99 hours: we left Saturday, July 19 at 10 am and arrived here Wednesday, July 23 at 1 pm (English time) or 2 pm (local time).

Very good crossing, ideal most of the time, beautiful weather, quiet sea and a light wind from the east, but turbulent last night with the wind increasing to force five with gust at force six and even seven. This lasted from 7 pm yesterday to 6 am today and the night seemed very long. Jens steered the whole night, I was “out of order”, sea sick and terrified. Jens didn't sleep at all and I slept one hour. But everything came back to normal this morning and the arrival under the sun at Ares helped forget this bad night.

We are very happy to have made this long crossing.

I'll write a more detailed blog tomorrow.

Saturday 19 to Wednesday 23, July 2014. Padstow (Wales)-Ares (Spain)

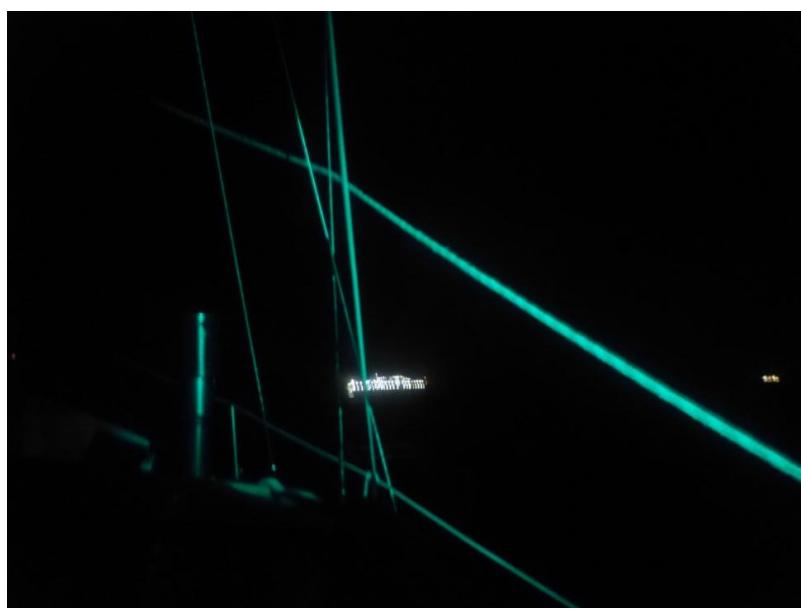
We start from Padstow at 10 am when they open the harbor gate.

The weather forecast is good for seven days: west wind, 3-4, turning east in the end. We can't wish better, so here we go. The chart plotter shows about 460 nautical miles (828 km) to go and more than 99 hours. It can't show a longer time, the counter stops at 99. Our neighbors leave just after us and we see them a long time, a little behind us, with their red sails.

There is virtually no wind and we motor. We read the newspaper and, coincidentally, the travel section of The Guardian today is about Bergen. We navigate along the coast of southwest England. At 8 pm, we pass the lighthouse Bendeen near Lands End, the southwestern tip of England. We see industrial ruins, with walls and chimneys, abandoned factories or mines. When it's dark, we can guess the glow of Scilly Islands on the right side. Many boats go in all directions, all have AIS (Automatic Identification System), we "see" them well and they "see" us as well.



Saturday at 8 pm. Lands End



Saturday at 11 pm. A cruise-boat, all illuminated, passes over there

The night is quiet. At 9 pm we begin our watches. Jens is steering and I go to bed, then we change every two hours until 9 am. This works very well and we apply this rythme the other nights too (except the last one). We eat well, three meals a day and luxury of luxuries, we can wash ouselves!



We can “see” the other boats.
We are the circle up, in the middle



Sunday at 9 am. Jens is checking the engine



Sunday. Nice weather

On Sunday, the wind increases a little and we'll sail. Our speed is 4 knots (7.2 km / h), we can read and do sudokus. We listen to the radio, the BBC has good programs. I also listen France-Inter, "Maman, les petits bateaux" (a program for children) at 7:30 pm. In the evening, Jens sees a long piece of yellow plastic lagging behind us. It is attached to the rudder, no to the propeller, fortunately. As we move forward, there is no problem, it floats behind us. But if we stop it may get caught in the propeller. It will be with us out until the last eventful night, when it detached itself and got lost.



Sunday. Dinner

Monday, same weather, even more quiet, we combine motor and sail. The sea, at times, is smooth, not one little shudder. It is not so often that the Bay of Biscay (notorious among sailors) is so quiet. We clearly see on the screen where the bottom goes from 200m depth to 2000, 3000 and even 4000 meters deep. At 9:30 am, a large ship carrying containers, changes its course by one or two degrees so we can keep our course. At 10 am we admire dolphins playing around Maja. At noon, Jens sends our position to Nina by the satellite-phone, and we are going to do that every day at noon.



Dolphin



Monday morning. I make tea

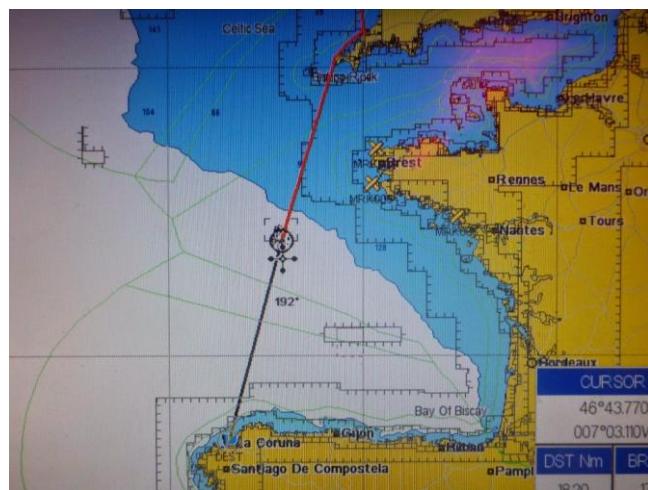
Always quiet, I can read and start a book, bought used for 50 pence in Inverness: "The Bells of Scotland Road" by Ruth Hamilton. This is not high literature but it helps to pass time. At night, when I watch, I read with a flashlight, and the two hours pass quickly. At 1:30 pm, on Monday, we are halfway: the plotter shows 225 miles to go and the counter shows 225 miles traveled. We sailed 51 hours.



Monday 1:30 pm.

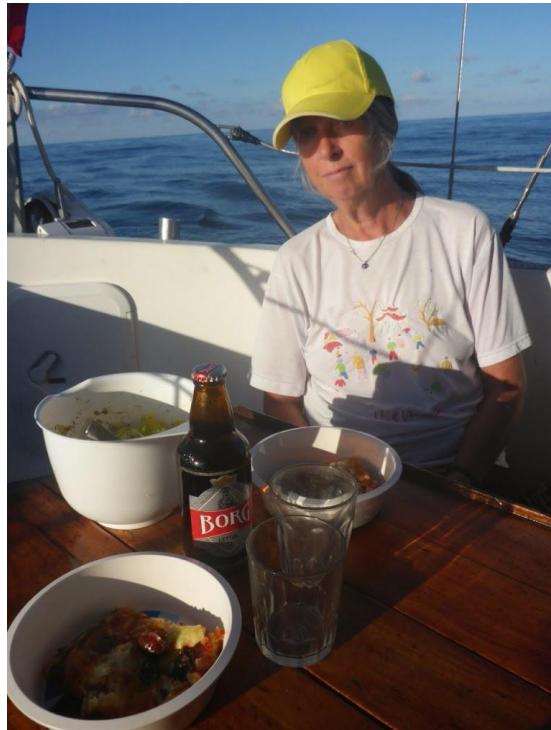
We did 225 nautical miles

We have 225 nautical miles again



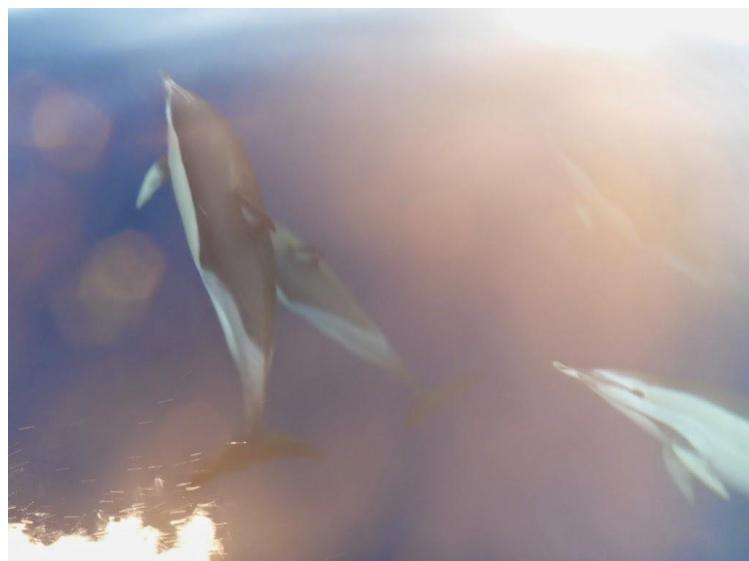
We are half way

All is well. In the afternoon, I take a nap and then Jens makes one too. The boat does not move much and Jens decides on Monday night to make a pizza. Not to be outdone, I make a salad. Good dinner, outside, with the table set, in the sun. The only concession to Maja's (light) movement is that we eat pizza and salad in bowls.



Eating home-made pizza in the sun on the Biscay Bay. Luxus

After dinner, a large shoal of dolphins offer us a beautiful sight. I can even take pictures of them underwater.



Quiet night between Monday and Tuesday. We change exactly every two hours. Tuesday morning, long lonely time, we only see the sea, not a boat, neither in real life, or on the screen. The wind becomes stronger, force 3-4, and we sail. Maja moves a little. In the

afternoon, we meet two sail boats, the first ones we see. One goes south-west and the other north-west.



Tuesday, July 22. We see a yacht for the first time

By late evening, the wind strengthens even more. I get seasick and manage to keep a pill. Dinner, a soup, does not go down well. Night falls, the wind forces and the waves increase. I try to take my watch from 11 pm to 1 am, but I do only one hour. I wake up Jens abruptly at around midnight: I "see" a boat on the screen, close, but I do not see it in real! I have a feeling we will crash into it in the dark and with these waves. Jens adjusts the scale of the plotter and reassures me, the boat is at 2 nautical miles (3.6 km). He takes the wheel and I'm out all night. The wind is really strong; the anemometer registers 14 m / s in gusts. 14 meters / second means force 7! The waves, short and powerful, didn't have time to form and remain averages, not so big. Fortunately, the wind is from east, it is the wind from west which makes the great breakers of the Bay of Biscay.

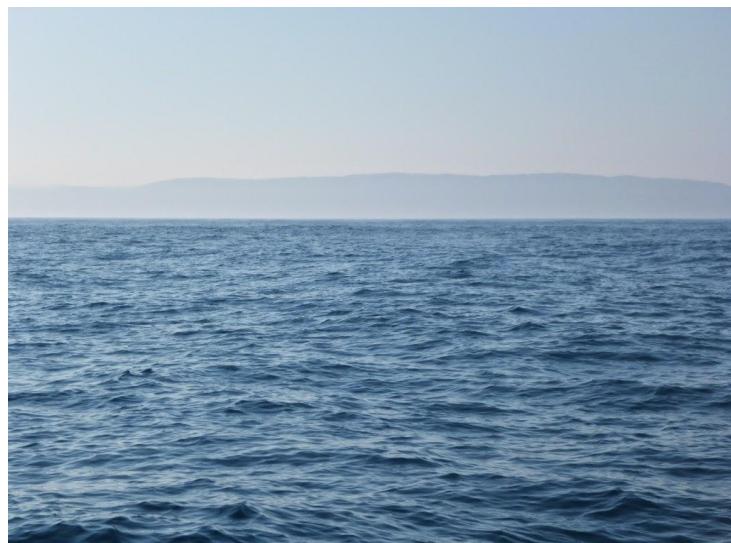


Night between July 22 and 23. The moon

It is nice weather, the sky is clear with many stars and Jens thinks it will not last. Jens is calm, confident and it reassures me. Maja goes well, she moves forwards like a locomotive. Jens reduces the jib and looses the mainsail a bit when she is heeling too much, but with my imagination, I think: "What if the wind forces even more?" I am not well and the night seems long. Jens dozes at times and I, after hours of fear, fell asleep at around 6 am on Wednesday. I sleep an hour and when I wake up at 7 am, the wind is much quieter, the waves smaller and we are a few hours from our place of arrival. Whew! Jens sees land at around 7 am. A good breakfast gives us back strength and moral and Jens can rest for an hour.

We arrive at Ares at 1 pm. There are two other marinas in La Coruña, but our guide recommends Ares, friendly and local.

We are very happy to arrive.



Wednesday, July 23. Land!



I raise the Spanish courtesy flag

Padstow-Ares : 444 nm (799 km)

Florvåg-Ares : 821 + 444 = 1 265 nm (2 277 km)



Arrival. Ares



23.07. 2:00 pm. Lunch

Thursday, July 24, 2014. Ares

We feel on vacation, beach, sun, siesta ...

Ares is very nice, a quiet little town with a long beach, 5 minutes from the marina. The first walk we did yesterday at around 4 pm, was not at the right time: no one in the streets, everything closed and a deserted beach. It is that we are in Spain, in the north, but in Spain. The restaurants serve dinner from 9 pm and people walk around late at night. The weather is nice, 25 ° but it can be misty too.

For us, this is the ideal place, quiet, not too hot. The municipal marina is friendly. We swim, we walk, we ride, the good life.



Ares

Friday, July 25, 2014. Ares

It is gray and mild, we do not see the sun today.

We stay at the boat the whole morning, Jens works a little (mail, a little seismology) and I do the blog and sort pictures.



Ares. The beach



The laundry is drying

After lunch, we ride east along the ría. These rías are like fjords, the sea enters the land. The road is good, passes through small villages, up and down. At the edge of the sea, the houses are mostly second homes, and many are closed. In the villages in the interior, many homes are abandoned. We're going to Redes, a small picturesque fishing harbor. The houses are built around the harbor, with their feet in the water and each has a stone staircase leading down into the water. Too bad it is gray, the sun and its light are missing.



Redes

We come back more inland. The landscape is green and the vegetation is lush. To my surprise (and joy) I see many "kattehaler" or loosestrife (salicaria), this indicates that it rains enough here, they like moisture. Many eucalyptus were planted and are now a problem, they choke the rest of the vegetation, according to an article in the newspaper. We pass blocks of flats, new and empty. Back in Ares, Jens wants to show me something. We pass in a small street, and in a showcase of an architectural firm, what do I see? Bryggen, our Bryggen in Bergen is exposed (in miniature, of course). The world is small.



Bryggen (back). Ares

We go swimming and are the only ones on the beach, I suppose because it is clowdy. The water temperature is 21°.

Today, July 25 is the day of Santiago de Compostela, and by extansion the day of Galicia. King Felipe came to Santiago to celebrate. It's a holiday, everything is closed, except "El bazar Chino" in Ares, a shop that sells everything and is owned by Chinese. In the evening, a grill is organized by a group of dance.



Grill

We go and for 9 euros we have a plate of grilled meat, a large potato, a good piece of bread and a glass of wine, served without a fork. It is served from 9 pm on the promenade. We are among the first and there is few people.



Grill

We take a coffee in a café and Jens start talking with our neighbors, two couples in our age. One of the men is a former professional mariner. We talk a lot of boat. Very nice. When we go back and pass the grill at 11 pm ,it is much more lively than at 9 pm, there I now a crowd, people are queuing to be served, children are running around, a singer ... sings and some couples are dancing.

Saturday, July 26, 2014. Ares

Nice weather but a strong north wind is blowing. But here, the north wind is not cold like at home, it is just refreshing a little, that's all.

We remain on the boat in the morning. Jens works and I do the blog.



We are working

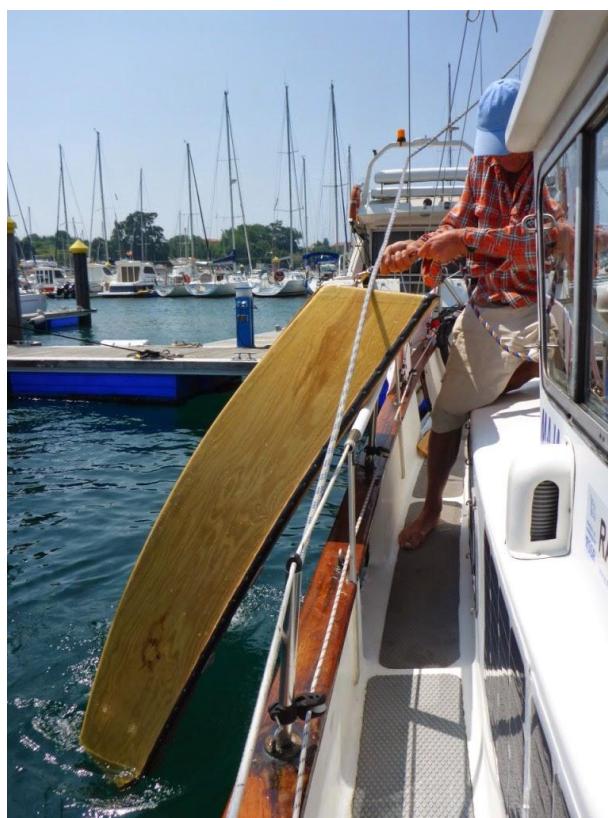
Jens wants to try the new tender, so we try, one after each other. He manages even to take it back on Maja by himself.



Jens tries the new tender (which he built himself)



My turn



He manages to take her on board by himself

We swim at half past twelve and take a "clara" (a mixture of beer and lemonade) at the marina bar. Here they serve a tapa with it, but it is called "pincho". We eat lunch and leave the boat for a ride. There are so many small roads that we can roam the countryside in all directions. We arrive at a new beach, with stairs. We swim once more and I find many pieces of polished glass.



The beach with stairs

Returning, the plan was to go shopping, but we are thirsty, so we take an orange juice on the promenade in the city. It is 7 pm, the beach is crowded and people walk along the promenade. Jens saw this morning, going to buy bread and newspapers, an ad for sales of "langostinos" plates organized by a local group. We ask and it is currently in a park at the end of the promenade. We go and enjoy excellent grilled prawns with garlic, bread and a glass of beer. All this for 15 euros for two.



Langostinos

We end this meal with a coffee, always on the promenade. There are a few cafes so places are rare: when a table is free it is immediately occupied again. We're lucky to get a table. Jens asks if they have a cake or something sweet and the waiter says they have only croissants. Well, a croissant will be our dessert. But what a croissant! Huge.

A choir of men gave a recital on the promenade and a group of young people are dancing on the beach.
Therefore we didn't do our groceries.



They are singing



They are dancing

Sunday, July 27, 2014. Ares

Starting today, we change our rythme, we walk or ride in the morning and we remain on the boat to "work" when it's hot in the afternoon. This makes more sense. So we ride at 11 am to the north. Ares is on the ría of Ares, of course, but a little further north, ría of Ferrol is parallel (east-west). Between the two there about 5 km. but in fact we don't know that, we have just a map of walks around Ares and it does not show the other ría to the north. After 5 km, we arrive at another small town, Mugardos. It is also a port and today a rowing regatta is organized there. Pretty harbor, but the city seems a little down, empty and abandoned houses. Just across the other side of the ría, we see Ferrol, large industrial port.



Ferrol over there



Rowing regatta. Mugardos

But to get there we must get to the bottom of the ría to the east and back. No way to do it by bike, it would be too long. We look a little at the regatta, drink an orange juice on the harbor and out again to the west. The road goes along the ría and shrinks. It becomes a dirt track, but it is OK. We arrive at an abandoned military fort that controlled the entrance to the ría of Ferrol and another fort on the opposite side. The estuary is narrow at this place and the military controlled all the passing boats. And there we have a choice: to make a big loop on a good road or take a shortcut on a small path. We take the small path. On the map, it says: "for mountain bikes only." But that's okay.



The path



We swim here



The café

We descend to a beautiful beach, but before we bathe in a small bay. It's 2 pm and we are hungry. A small cafe near the beach, in the shade, serves sandwiches. Good break but to start again is hard, it's hot and it goes up and up. We arrive very tired at Ares. We have done at least 20 km, in the sun and with much uphill.

Monday, July 28, 2014. Ares

Today we are resting, just a little bike ride, shopping and swimming. The weather is nice, 25 ° but the wind from the north is quite strong. We are leaving tomorrow to go to La Coruña, 2 hours sailing from Ares.

Tuesday, July 29 , 2014. LaCoruña



Bye,

bye

Ares

We leave Ares at 11am. We'll keep a good memory of this charming town and its friendly marina. We pass the small beaches where we swam. The sea is quite calm and there is little wind. Jens is fishing and catch two mackerel, just enough for lunch.



Jens is fishing



Arrival to La Coruña



Good bike path

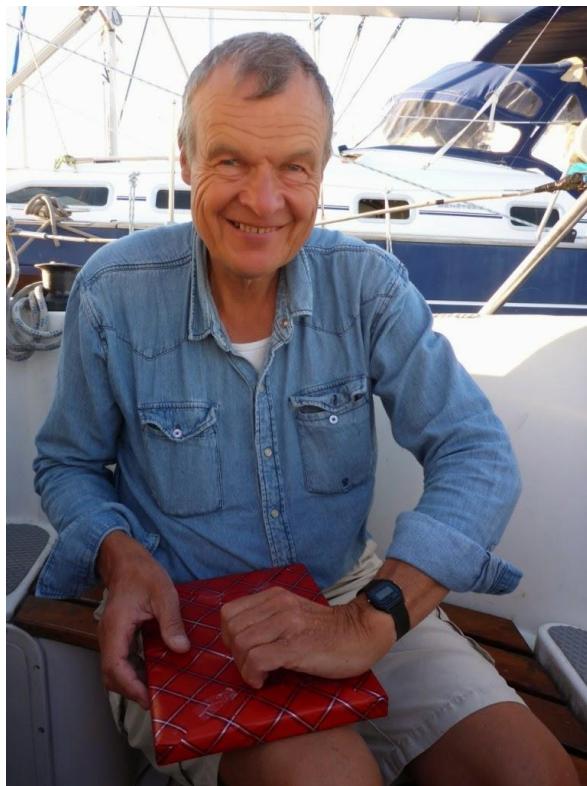
We arrive in La Coruña (A Coruña is in Galician) at 1:30 pm. The city seems big and beautiful. There are two marinas, one is closer to the center than the other. We go to this one. The first boats we see are French or Norwegian. These are the two most represented nationalities in the marina. We have lunch, the mackerel are very good. Then we go and register us at the marina office. The guy gives us a map of the city. We start cycling. A walk with bike path goes all along the coast. It is sunny but the wind is blowing, like every afternoon. We see beaches, crowded, but with few people in the water. And we arrive, unintentionally, to the "Torre de Hercules", the only Roman lighthouse still in operation in the world. We visit it, it is as impressive piece of architecture and the view from above is beautiful. But I'm glad to be on land, the sea is quite white. We take a good orange juice and ride back to the boat. I have errands to run: Jens has his birthday today. Small pedestrian streets behind the harbor are animated. I walk and walk, and finally find what I want, and even wrapping paper.



La Coruña

We talk a bit with our French neighbors, arrived yesterday from the island of Yeu with a stopover in Gijón. They tell us that the marina is nice but sometimes a wave enters the port and makes the boats move. This is when a big ship passes outside the marina. And just when they say that a wave arrives. It is a small one but our Maja starts to roll, even in the marina. We celebrate Jens' birthday with a small glass on the boat. He gets a bottle of Spanish brandy,

a bottle of wine (from Nina), two books on La Coruña and Santiago de Compostela and a model VW Combi (5cm). Then we go and dine in a restaurant. Happy Birthday, my dear husband.



Happy Birhday, Jens

Ares-La Coruña : 8 nm (14 km)

Florvåg-La Coruña : 1 265 + 8= 1 273 nm (2 291 km)

Wednesday, July 30, 2014. La Coruña



Little Maja

Nice weather. Jens goes, like every morning, to buy fresh bread and two newspapers “El País” and “La Voz de Galicia”. We read the papers after breakfast. Then we make a long bike ride, almost all around the city. A wide promenade with a bike path follows the waterfront, in the city and around the peninsula where is located the Torre de Hercules. We bathe on a small beach, it's very nice.



The small beach

Lunch at the boat, blog and work for Jens (and a nap too), then we leave by bike again to downtown. We go to the house of Galicia where they give us a map and a booklet on the ports of Galicia. We bathe again, this time on the main beach and dine at the boat. A short walk after dinner in the old quarters ends the day. La Coruña is a pretty city, a real “big city”.

We'll leave tomorrow

Thursday, July 31, 2014. Camariñas

We start at 8 am. Just to go out of the Bay of La Coruña takes us almost an hour against the waves, but they are small, no problem. We turn the cap of the Torre de Hercules and go westward.



The “Torre de Hercules”



Bye, bye La Coruña



Jens puts a boom at the gib



Inhospitable coast

The wind is light and the waves a little bigger after the cap. Maja is moving a little. We are motoring with the mainsail to stabilize. Later, the wind strengthens a bit and we have it almost behind. Maja is rolling. We can't do anything and I'm going to rest, and then it is Jens' turn. We see at least ten sailboats going in the same direction as us. They pass us, all of them. We continue like this all day, there are no ports on this stretch of the coast. In the afternoon, the wind dies completely. At around 5 pm we enter the Ria de Camariñas. And then a gust of wind takes us by surprise, it goes from a force 0 to force 5 in 5 minutes. Fortunately, we arrive. Jens phones the marina, and yes, they have place, I was afraid it could have been full when we saw the number of boats that overtook us. We are approaching the dock when we hear a loud cry: "Velkommen Maja". First, I'm not sure who it is, but at a closer look, I recognize Pia and Ulf, two Swedes we met in Lerwick, on the Shetland last year. What a coincidence to meet again here. We fall into the arms of each other. We have a drink at the bar in the marina. Pia and Ulf are with two French persons, Hervé and Luce, and a German guy. This poor German was involved in a solo race from Saint-Nazaire, France, to the Caribbean. He was struck by his mainsail and dislocated his shoulder, fell and got a hole in the head. Another boat from the regatta tried to help him but could not because of the waves. He has to call for help from the maritime rescue here in Camariñas. They evacuated him by boat to a hospital and another rescue boat towed his boat into the harbor. It was painful and in addition he is very disappointed to have abandoned the race. Pia, Ulf, Hervé and Luce are helping him prepare his boat to be repatriated to Germany by road. We dine all together at the marina restaurant and eat a good paella. A very good evening.



Ulf, Ingo (the injured German), Jens



Luce, Hervé, Pia

La Coruña-Camariñas : 41 nm (74 km)

Florvåg-Camariñas : $1\ 273 + 41 = 1\ 314$ nm (2 365 km)

Friday, 1 August 2014. Camariñas

Hervé and Luce will leave but before they invite us to visit their boat, Maui. The first owner had it built and was very security conscious. Everything is made very strong, reinforced, and he foresaw possible problems and their solutions. He had a sort of dome above the deck and a chair suspended inside to be able to steer the boat from inside. He had installed the same arrival system for diesel to the stove that was installed on Maja by Jens (which also serves as a reserve for the diesel engine). Hervé and Luce have a daughter in the Caribbean and think to visit her by boat later. Maui is able to do that, she has crossed the Atlantic several times. They come to see Maja and they like her, they say she is practical and cosy.



Luce and Hervé in their boat

We ride to a small beach. The sky is gray and there is nobody. We swim very quickly, the water is 15°, it's quite cold. Returning, we can smell grilled sardines at a café. Three sardines each with bread, this is our lunch. Blog, rest, dinner at the boat. Time flies.

Saturday, August 2, 2014. Camariñas



A Viking party is announced in the local newspaper

It's raining and it's market day. Women sell vegetables from their garden. We buy green beans, honey and cheese. We walk a little in Camariñas, it is a little bit messy and many houses are uninhabited. Since we are in Galicia, we have noted an ubiquitous vegetable in the gardens. This plant looks like our kale that we have in the garden. We ask a lady what it is. The plant is called berza and is used in soups in Galicia, with smoked pork and other vegetables. This lady talks a lot and from berza we turn to the economic situation in Spain, corruption, politics etc ...



Berza

We go back to the boat and just have time to say goodbye to Pia and Ulf, they are leaving. They have with them Pia's two nephews who have never been sailing before; not very good weather for their first outing. We lunch early and, despite the gray and threatening clouds, we ride our bikes to the lighthouse of Vilán. We follow the coast and this place deserves its name of "Costa da Morta" (Coast of Death), there are rocks everywhere. Fortunately, we've already passed it by boat, it is north of Camariñas, otherwise I would not want to sail there! We arrive at the lighthouse, the museum of shipwrecks (!) is closed until 3:30 pm, the siesta. It starts to rain heavily and not a tree or a roof over our heads. But the girl of the museum, very kindly, opens the door and makes us go into the museum entrance, we and another couple of French cyclists. We wait a bit and it calms down, we leave ... and it starts raining again after 5 minutes! But it's not cold.



Vilán lighthouse is hidden in the fog



Now we can see it



Quick bath

We continue along the coast. The scenery is magnificent, moors, rocks and even very high sand dunes. We see the "English Cemetery". This is not a cemetery literally, but a monument to the 169 victims of the sinking of the British ship "Serpent" in 1890, only three sailors survived. We then descend to a small beach, the rain stopped, and we bathe, water at 15 °. We do a big loop and come to Camariñas at 5:45 pm. Jens goes shopping, we have a guest tonight, Ingo, the wounded German. I go home, I'm tired. We put a chicken (3.5 euros!) in the oven. He comes at 8 pm and we dine outside on the boat. He introduces us to a world that we do not know, the high-level racers. He has trained two years, spent a lot of money and this race, the Transquadra solo, was his dream. He is very friendly and we agree on many points. He is of course very disappointed. He started the race very well, was in second place, and wham, everything falls apart because of this accident. He wants to stop racing and start sailing with his wife and children. But it's hard to give up that dream. We wish him good luck. He leaves at 11:30 pm. We spent a very nice evening with him.



Ingo, the injured German



Traditional stone granary (horreo)

Sunday, August 3, 2014. Finisterre



Bye, bye Camariñas

I get up at 7 am and we do not see at 50 meters, a thick fog hides everything. When we get up later, it is a little bit better. Some yachts are leaving. One thing I forgot to say is that the majority of sailboats in the ports along the coast of Galicia are French. We will leave too, but wait until the sun makes the fog disappear. We start at 11 am and at least ten boats leave too.



We are not alone

There is no wind, the sea is calm (just swell) and blue and the sun shines. We leave the ría de Camariñas and turn left to go south. This is an ideal crossing. At 1pm, the autopilot fails, it does not work at all. This is not a big problem today, we follow the coast so we have benchmarks. This would be more annoying at sea, it's harder to follow a course when we only see the sea. We steer by hands. We arrive at Cape Finisterre (in Galician: Fisterra). We pass between an island and the cape, all other the boats (3) pass off. But it goes well, it is very quiet today. Jens wants to stop at the small harbor of the same name, Finisterre, nestled behind the cap. But in the guide, they point out that there is no marina and there is little room for sailboats. We'll see anyway. The harbor is crowded with fishing boats behind a large breakwater high, wide and which looks very strong. Southwestern storms can be serious here, at the "end of the earth".



Cap Finisterre

We make our way between the boats and at the harbor bottom, we see a Spanish sailboat moored outside the local marina for small fishing boats. We ask him if we can stop there and he says no problem. He helps us to tie up and now we are the only two yachts in the port of Finisterre. Other sailboats anchored just outside the harbor. We go ashore and, surprise, it's party time: funfair, music, open cafés ... This is the Day of the "longueiros", knives, those long shells found in the sand.



Maja in the fishing harbor. Finisterre



Fun fair

Finisterre (5000 inhabitants), like Ares and Camariñas is a real small town, with many high buildings and many shops. It's touristy, the beach is beautiful and what's more, some Santiago de Compostela pilgrims come on foot to complete the pilgrimage at Cape Finisterre. We see them in town, tired, the pilgrim stick in hand and a scallop shell on their backpack. We swim at around 7 pm, the beach, huge, with very fine sand and clear water, is at 5 minutes by bike from the city center but the water is only 18 °. Then dinner of chicken leftovers and to bed.



A pilgrim

Camariñas-Finisterre : 20 nm (36 km)
Florvåg-Finisterre : $1\ 314 + 20 = 1\ 334$ nm (2 401 km)

Monday, August 4, 2014. Finisterre



The beach

Rest this morning and beach. It is really a beautiful beach and we stay almost an hour. The water is cool, but the sand is warm. We take a "clara" in returning and Jens asks a plate of "mejillones", thinking that would be mussels. But the waiter brings us "longueirones", the famous knives. They are "interesting" and fortunately, they come with good bread. This is our lunch. Then nap, we follow the local customs and work: blog for me and change of the autopilot engine for Jens.



Jens changes the autopilot

Of course, we have a spare one. It is mounted in the big storage at the back, so first it must be emptied. Jens works and works and is warm. He has problems to mount the new engine: the seal is not tight. He tries several times and finds that the new engine is oriented in a different way than the old one, and when he understood that the seal is tight. We go back to the beach, the water is now at 21 °, it is very nice. We go back to the boat and decide to go and visit some Norwegians on a catamaran anchored a little further. We put the tender on the water and Jens is rowing to them. We met them the first time in La Coruña. They offer us a beer and we spend a good time together on their boat.



We visit a Norwegian couple on a catamaran



It's my turn to row

There is space on a catamaran. It is my turn to row on the way back, 10 minutes. Then we dine at a restaurant with a plate of seafood ... and we have, again, the long shells (knives?), but also other shellfish, washed down with a local white wine. The television is on and retransmits a rally in Finland. Good evening, just the two of us.

Tuesday, August 5, 2014. Finisterre



The long uphill road to the lighthouse

For once, it is I who go and buy the newspapers. I walk a little in the town. Finisterre is a nice little town, very old and well maintained. It is market day and I buy a new T-shirt. Then we leave, to bike to the lighthouse, 3.5 km, mostly uphill. The weather is gray. Finisterre lighthouse is very touristy, people want to go "at the end of the earth." Many people and, of course, souvenir shops.



Finisterre lighthouse



When we came, we sailed between this rock and the land

To come back is freewheeling, it's practically a long descent. We see a small beach at the entrance of town. We swim there. A group of young walkers from the Santiago trail rests and offers us, nicely, some biscuits. One of the girls is French and is still quite flabbergasted to have walked so long, 600 km! A great experience. Lunch at the boat, a little rest and we leave by bike again, this time to the east, to a village called Sardiñeiro at 7 km. Again, it goes up. We admire the "horreos" these granaries on stilts, the pretty harbor and the beach. But it's too cool and we don't bathe. We recognize an Irish sailboat anchored in front of the beach, she was in Camariñas along with us. We see two people who seem to come from the boat and are

rowing out to the beach with their tender. We are waiting for them on the beach, and we talk a little with them, but there's something wrong, I don't recognize the man at all. And for good reason: these people come from another sailboat anchored a little further! They were just visiting the Irish boat. He is Dutch and she is German.



Horreos

We return, having done a good distance by bike today, 7 km in the morning and 14 km in the afternoon, 21 km in all. While I prepare dinner, a Spanish gentleman shows interest in our boat. He says Maja is beautiful, is a real boat ... I invite him to come on board. He is nice but very chatty, he talks about everything mainly about history with a capital H, and I do not know when it will stop. But he went anyway after a while. Nice dinner and in bed. We leave tomorrow.

Wednesday, August 6, 2014. Arousa



We don't see much of Cap Finisterre when leaving

I go to the post office to send two postcards, one for Estrid (Jens old aunt in Denmark) and one for my brother Michel. Then we leave at 10 am, by a quiet weather and a little foggy. We don't see the lighthouse of Cape Finisterre in passing, it is hidden in the mist. Jens puts on the autopilot ... and it doesn't work! He plunges into the hold gain, tickles a little the contacts and it starts working. We navigate along the coast to the south, but don't see much to land because of the fog. We are motoring, there is virtually no wind and the little there is is against us. We enter the Ria de Arousa, a large ría, 30 km long and 15 km wide. It's almost like an inland sea.



Ría de Arousa entrance.

The entrance is narrow and you have to pass to the right place. The coasts, inside, are much built, towns and villages succeeding each other, and the traffic of various boats, fishing boats and sailing boats is pretty intense. But what catches the eye immediately, is the mussels parks. We see hundreds of them. We feel like anchoring today. The guide presents a bay with a good anchorage on the "Illa de Arousa" (Arousa Island). Several sailboats are already at anchor. It is opposite a beautiful beach, "wild", I mean without houses. I'm at the wheel, motoring slowly and Jens drops the anchor. We wait a bit and I put the motor in reverse to test if it holds, and we go back! The anchor doesn't hold. So Jens pulls it up and drops it again. And this time, it holds. We do not have much experience of anchoring, we did that once in Scotland in July 2012 and I don't have good memories of it: it was blowing hard, the chain was squeaking and I didn't sleep.

We take a well deserved ankerdram (orange juice, we are reasonable) and we swim directly from the boat. A Swiss boat arrives, anchors and the anchor doesn't hold, like we did. The other boats depart in the late afternoon, they were Spaniards who came to spend the day at the beach by boat. We are three boats which spend the night here, a Swiss, a Spaniard and us. We have dinner on the boat and go with the tender to have coffee at the beach. It is 10 pm and there are still many people.

If you look at the beach from the boat it is idyllic but behind Maja the mussel parks are not very beautiful, and the gray weather doesn't help, it would be prettier under the sun.



Maja anchored at Arousa

Finisterre-Arousa: 35 nm (63 km)

Florvåg-Arousa : $1\ 334 + 35 = 1\ 369$ nm (2 464 km)

Thursday, August 7, 2014. Arousa

Not good weather, rain and fog. The anchor held up and we slept well. We row ashore (5 min) and go for a walk. The beach is deserted and the bar is closed. We go to the small harbor nearby, Xufre, 2 km approximately. The rain stops a bit. The harbor is full of fishing boats and behind of mussels parks.



Xufre. Mussels parks

Tomorrow and all weekend the villagers organize a mussels party and are in the process of setting up tents. We walk a little in the village. A house is all decorated with mosaics and as we stop to look at them, the man invites us to see in his yard other mosaics.



Mosaics

We buy bread and our two usual newspapers then walk back. It starts to rain again. The bar is open and we order a fish dinner for tonight. Back on Maja, lunch and newspaper. I phone my sister Catherine to wish her a Happy Birthday. The sun makes a brief appearance and we take the opportunity to swim from the boat. Jens tries (and succeeds) to climb into the tender. We row again to land and go to the lighthouse at Punta Caballo, 1 km. This lighthouse is located on a mass of rounded and pink rocks. We go back, we change, I mean we put on a sweater and go to land to dine at the bar at 8 pm. The menu is simple but everything is good: salad, fresh cod with potatoes and a good sauce. Dessert is an ice cream cone, and to accompany the coffee Jens takes a rum and me a coffee liqueur. An excellent dinner in a pleasant surrounding and cheap. We are now five boats anchored who will spend the night here.



Good dinner on the beach

Friday, August 8, 2014. Villagarcía de Arousa

The wind forced tonight and I did not sleep very well. I woke up several times and looked around but all the boats kept their place, none started to drift. Of the five yachts at anchor, four had their anchor light, a white light at the top of the mast. But the Spaniard did not, perhaps because they (three men) had spent several hours at the beach bar ... On Friday morning, when we wake up, it's raining and everything is gray, it's like in Bergen!



It's rainig

We decide to leave. I must say that since Finisterre, where there was nothing, we did not take advantage of the services of a marina like water, electricity, toilets, showers. We don't need the electricity, we have so many solar panels that we produce enough and we still have enough water, but I really want a shower, shampoo and washing clothes. But the good side of it is that we have "slept" free for five nights. We get up the anchor, literally, no problem and leave at 9:45 am, sailing eastwards, deeper into the Ria de Arousa. We motor at 4 knots (7 km / h), it stopped raining. We pass between mussel parks and reach Vilagarcía (Villagarcía in Spanish) at 11: 30 am in the rain.



Arrival. Villagrcía

We tie Maja in the marina and walk into town to find a laundromat. We ask if our clothes can be ready tonight, yes, no problem. We return to the boat and pack a big bag of clothes that Jens carries on his bike. Meanwhile, I rinse our two beach towels that are stiff with salt. I do this on the dock, in a bucket, in the rain, and I put them "to dry" outside on Maja. They will be rinsed even more by the rain.



Our beach towels are going to be well rinsed!

To reward us for our efforts, and taking advantage of very low prices, we lunch at the marina. For € 8.5, we have a full meal, appetizer, main course, dessert, coffee and drink. We are supporting the local economy ... Villagarcía has 37 000 inhabitants and seems a big city, lively streets, tall buildings, squares. We stay on the boat in the afternoon, it's raining. We dine light and go for a walk along the sea after dinner, it stopped raining. Some people are putting up a fair right back the marina, I don't think we will sleep much tomorrow night!



What a weather!

Arousa-Villagarcía : 4 nm (7 km)

Florvåg-Villagarcía : $1\ 369 + 4 = 1\ 373$ nm (2 471 km)

Saturday, August 9, 2014. Villagarcía

Good shower and shampoo, what a luxury. I chat in the showers with a French woman, she and her husband are on their way, on a sailing boat of course, for the West Indies. When I return to Maja, Jens lit the stove to make coffee, apparently there is no more gas. He finds it odd, normally a bottle lasts much longer. We breakfast outside and then he began to look at the gas problem. The bottle is not empty, it's something else. He tries to blow into the tube, but it is blocked somewhere. Finally he finds that it is one of two valves that we are closing, for safety when we don't use gas, which remains closed. He repairs it and voilà.



Jens is fixing the gas problem

Then walk into town, is very lively because it's Saturday. It does not rain but it's gray. We go to the train station to buy our tickets for tomorrow, we go to Santiago de Compostela. We walk, we see an old castle, the little river and the market. Jens buys two bottles of local wine, one white and one red, at € 1.20 each, an unlabeled homemade wine. We have a drink at a cafe and the tapas are so abundant that it makes our lunch. Return to the boat and we get on our bikes and head off to the west. The road runs along the estuary and empty industrial buildings, abandoned houses testify to the crisis. We pass a small harbor, Vilaxuan, and arrive at a beautiful beach. It's probably siesta time, it is almost empty.



The beach



Jeannette on the beach

It's nice and we even get a little sun. Jens wants to ride by the interior and we find ourselves on a high way that goes up and up. We leave it and pass through a small village going down, down and come back to Villagarcía at about 6:30 pm. A little later I hear that the fair starts and I go out to take a picture of the kind of roller coaster, too bad you don't have the sound: the screams of the girls. A gentleman on the dock says "God dag" to me. I am quite surprised and we begin to talk: he worked six years on a Norwegian ship. Pepe, that is his name, is now retired and has fond memories of that period. He comes on board on Maja, finds her beautiful, of course, and talks a little with Jens. He leaves and I start to do the blog, time passes quickly and here we are at 9 am, with nothing to eat! The cafeteria at the marina saves us, mussels and pulpo on the balcony, watching the sea. Not too bad. The music is in full swing between the fair and a nightclub when go to bed.



Imagine the screaming

Sunday, August 10, 2014. Villagarcía

The music last night kept us company for a while, but we ended up falling asleep. We wake up this morning in the pouring rain. We hesitate: to go or not to go to Santiago? We go. We take the train at 9:45 am that goes to Santiago and La Coruña, fast and comfortable train.



We take the train to Santiago de Compostela

The trip takes half an hour and we arrive in Santiago, in the rain. We ask for a city map at the station but they don't have one and they send us to a tourist office with explanations not too clear. We walk, we walk in the modern city and finally we see people that look like pilgrims going in the same direction. We follow them and we come in the old town, gray, monumental and shining with the rain. We find the cathedral but on the wrong side, we have to go all around to finally see the main facade.



The cathedral. Santiago de Compostela



Tired pilgrims



The square in front of the cathedral

The crowd is mixed, pilgrims and tourists. Pilgrims line up outside the official office of pilgrimage for their last stamp at the end of the pilgrimage; others sat on the ground and seem tired. As it rains Jens agrees to visit a museum, the museum of the cathedral and pilgrimage. But it is actually only about the cathedral, so I can drag him into a second museum, the one on the pilgrimage. Jens who visit two museums on the same day, it is a special day. But visiting museums and cultural tourism make us hungry, so we'll have lunch, it is 2 pm, we are the first customers and the waiter has time to serve us calmly, but by 3 pm, the room is full and the poor guy runs like hell from the cafe on the ground floor to the restaurant on the first floor. Very good lunch, in fact we eat too much. Yet I try to do an effort, I chose the melon for dessert, but they don't have it and I let myself be tempted by a chocolate mousse. We are lucky: it is when we have lunch that it rains the most, the rain subsides when we are finished. To burn those calories, we start walking, climb, descend, cross a park ... At 5 pm, we can't walk more and we go back to the station and leave for Villagarcía at 5:36 pm and arrive at 6:10 pm, in the rain. An interesting but humid day. Dinner tonight is simple: tea and toast.

The funfair starts again tonight, but we get used to everything, and we're so tired we fell asleep despite the boom, boom of the battery.

Monday, August 11, 2014. San Vicente do Mar

Hooray! It's sunny. Jens buys the two newspapers, but inadvertently takes two copies of *El País*, so I go to give it back and do some shopping. I also go to the post office and duly queue to buy two stamps for my postcards. The terraces are full of people who take their breakfast, everyone comes out and enjoys the sunshine after the rainy day yesterday. We leave at 11 am westward, out of the Ria de Arousa. We pass in front of "our" beach where we anchored and go out to sea, motoring, there is no wind.



It is so quiet that Jens can vacuum under way

We turn south and drive along the coast a bit to the next ría, that of Pontevedra. We spotted a small harbor with a very quiet little marina (according to the guide) at the entrance to the ría, San Vicente do Mar. Jens calls the harbor master who tells us that, unfortunately, they are full but that he can put us at an external pontoon. We don't know exactly what that means but we say yes. So he comes with his Zodiac and shows us a floating pontoon at the harbor entrance. I prepare the ropes, one in front and one in back, and the fenders, we think we'll tie along the pontoon, as usual, but no, here you have to put the nose on the jetty, and the back of the boat to a rope that is anchored to the bottom of the water.



San Vicente do Mar, "a quiet little village"!



Maja is perpendicular to the pontoon

The guy is with us on his Zodiac, goes on the pontoon and ties our bow (nose) to the pontoon and Jens ties us back at the rope. Maja is perpendicular to the pontoon. I wonder how I will go down to the pontoon, but it is a silly question: the pontoon has no connection to land. The guy tells us that if we want to go ashore, we call on his mobile and he does the "water taxi". We are the only "yacht" at the pontoon, a dinghy from the sailing school is our only neighbor. We put the tender onto the water and Jens goes to the marina office to fill the papers (and what papers: license, identity document for Maja, boat insurance, passports, and even an application in writing to get Internet!). Then we go for a walk, we can't take our bikes to land. We walk along the sea, we sunbathe, we swim and we go to see the fortifications that we have seen this morning, arriving by boat. It is warm and sunny and there is a lot of people on the beaches. San Vicente, supposedly a quiet village, is actually a resort apparently very popular. Dinner at the boat in the sun but the wind picks up a bit. By late evening, we share our pontoon with five yachts, but they are on the other side, more exposed than us.



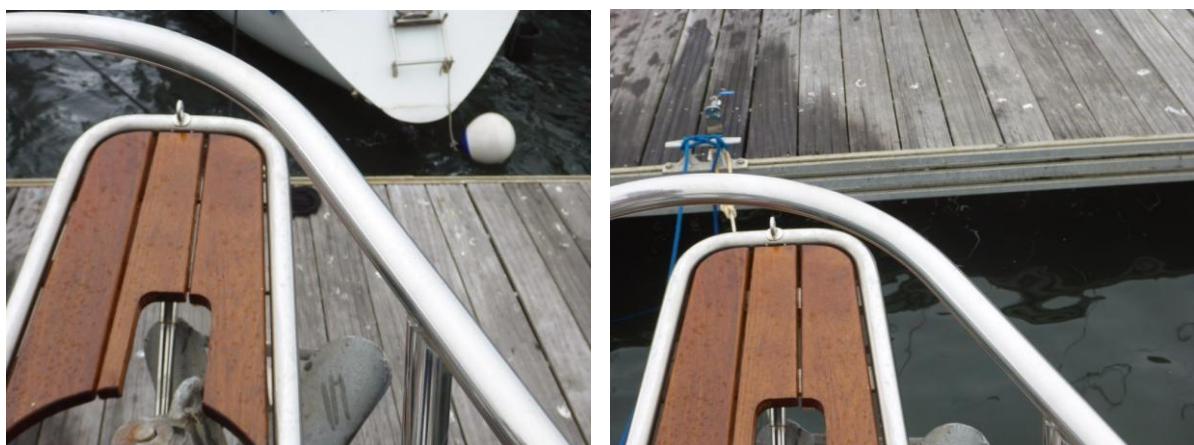
The weather is nice, at least

Villagarcía-San Vicente do Mar: 17 nm (30 km)

Florvåg-San Vicente do Mar: $1\ 373 + 17 = 1\ 390$ nm (2 502 km)

Tuesday, August 12, 2014. San Vicente do Mar

When we went to bed last night, it was blowing a little. But when we wake up this morning, the wind is strong, coming from the sea to our pontoon and the waves too. The five yachts are on the front line and dance a lot, we too, but a little less. They go up and down as if they were sailing on the waves. The pontoon curls in every direction. A lady of a sailboat goes down to the pontoon to take pictures, but she has problem to stand up and when she walks, it looks like she is drunk! It is uncomfortable but not dangerous so long as the pontoon holds, and it holds. We must secure everything on the boat as if we going to sea. But there is not much we can do, only wait for it to pass. Jens goes ashore with the tender and during that time I repair the flag which is frayed. I am almost seasick doing it, Maja is moving so much. I put a photo of the bow of Maja, above the pontoon and well below the pontoon to show you how she moves.



Up and down



It's really moving. Maja on the left



Jens rows to land



The harbor master comes back with Jens

When Jens is at the marina office, the harbor master says that there will be a place for us in the marina later. He has also a place for the smaller of the five yachts. Jens comes back and we both go ashore for a little walk. We meet the harbor master, and he told us that the place is free. He picks us up with his Zodiac and helps us to move Maja away from the pontoon, it is quite tricky with the wind. But everything goes well and our new place is among the small motor boats in the marina. We go for our walk, but from our new place, we must use a gate which is lost. Even to go out we need a key, and they are short of keys! They are going to make copies, but right now we have to climb over the gate to go out!



We don't have a key so we must climb over the gate



Maja on her new place

A yacht leaves and now there are only three yachts moored in the uncomfortable position. We are glad to have a "real" place, it is much quieter. We have lunch and go to a big beach east of San Vicente, but it's gray and we do not stay there long. By late afternoon, the wind decreases and the three yachts depart. We have dinner and go for a walk on the pier. Here and there, a staircase is built down to the sea (but with a fence at the bottom) to allow people to fish.

Thursday, August 14, 2014. Moaña (near Vigo)

We leave after taking diesel. We didn't take diesel since Padstow, in England and the tank is almost half full. The harbor master, a very nice man, admires Maja. We compliment him on his marina and he returns the compliment to us and says that we are friendly. But it is because, one: we speak Spanish and two: that our boat is not chic. We go out to sea at 10 am, the weather is nice but no wind.



Nice weather

Here, often there is no wind in the morning and the wind picks up at around noon and blows quite strongly in the afternoon. We follow the coast to the south. We enter the ría de Vigo and go to the marina at Moaña, we called and they are waiting for us. Maja will stay there four weeks, alone. We leave to France from Vigo, direct flight to Paris, tomorrow, we have a family party near Fontainebleau and off again to Norway on Monday, and there wait for the birth of Nina and Sveinung's baby, Theo's little brother at the end of August. We fly back to Moaña on September 13. This marina was recommended to us by Tito, the Spanish guy we met in Finisterre. The first impression confirms that, the harbor master is a dynamic young woman, security is good and it looks well organized.



The laundry is drying. Moaña

Jens contact Pia and Ulf, they are in Baiona, near Vigo. We thought of going to see them, but it is complicated and long and we decide not to go. They expect to stay long enough in Portugal, so maybe we will see them later there. We make a laundry and go to the beach, it is a beautiful beach and height of happiness for me, full of beautiful pieces of glass, nice colors and well polished. Moaña is in front of Vigo, on the other side of the ría and to go town we can take a speed boat or make a detour by a bridge further upstream. We take the boat, "Pirata de Ons" (Ons is a large island to the west, close enough to Vigo) and do an hour of tourism in Vigo which seems a very large city.



The ferry to Vigo

We dine of a "caldo Gallego" (Galician soup) with those famous berzas, the large plant that we see everywhere, but there's so little of them that we hardly feel the taste. Then small fried fish for Jens and a fish "à la Galician" for me, but the same dish was better at the café on the beach where we were anchored in Arousa.



Vigo

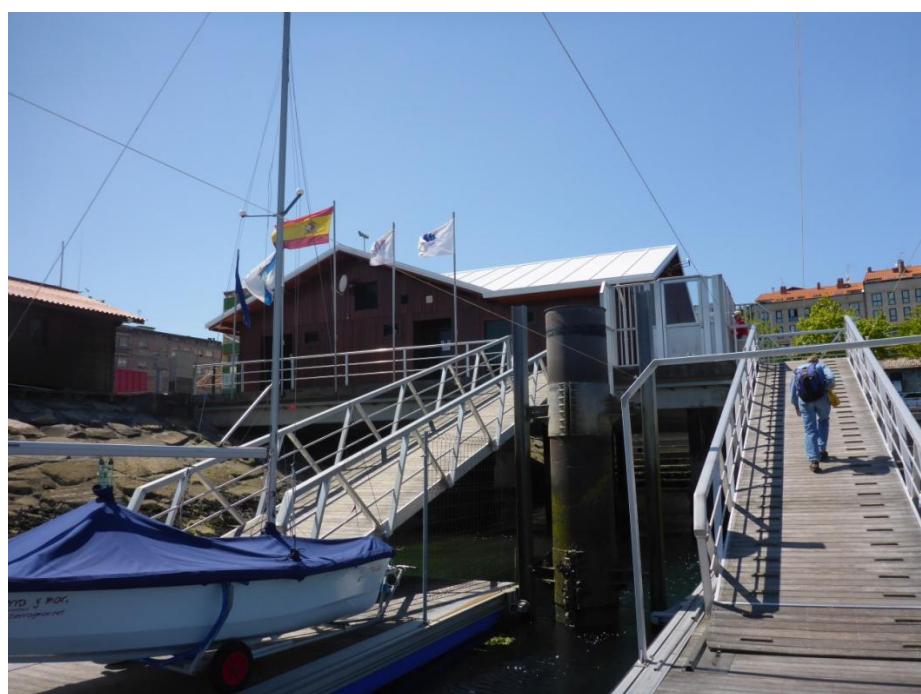
San Vicente do Mar-Moaña: 19 nm (34 km)
Florvåg-Moaña: $1\ 390 + 19 = 1\ 409$ nm (2 536 km)

Friday, August 15, 2014. Moaña

We are now in Moaña, in front of Vigo. We are going to leave Maja in the marina here while we fly to France first (three days) then to Norway: there we will wait for the birth of Nina and Sveinung's baby, Theo's little brother. We fly from Vigo this afternoon, directly to Paris. We come back here on September 13, so the blog is interrupted until this date. See you soon.



Moaña



We are leaving to France and Norway. Moaña



See you soon

Sunday, September 14, 2014. Moaña

We are again in Moaña. We had a very nice trip, a good family meeting in France and the great happiness of Kian's birth in Norway at the end of August.

Today, it is rest day, a small walk, a swim in the sea and back to be used to live on the boat again.

The weather is not so good, sun and showers but it is not cold, 24-25 degrees.



Maja. Moaña

Monday, September 15, 2014. Moaña

We found Maja in good condition and with pleasure and the town of Moaña too. The town is quiet, the tourists are gone.

We slept very well last night. The weather is always the same: a stationary depression west of Portugal, wind, rain, waves, so we stay here. Our Swedish friends Pia and Ulf are in Lisbon and are also waiting for better weather to sail to Madeira. And this weather will last a few days.

We took our bikes and went this morning to the right, toward the east, along the sea. The tourist office is in this direction in the city hall but is now closed, the summer is finished. The time is sometimes very gray, then the sun shines a little, then a shower ... It's changing but it is mild. Yesterday it was raining when we went for a walk, so I put on my rain clothes and rubber boots. The sun came out and I was too hot, especially with the boots. We had lunch today at a refreshment bar near the marina.

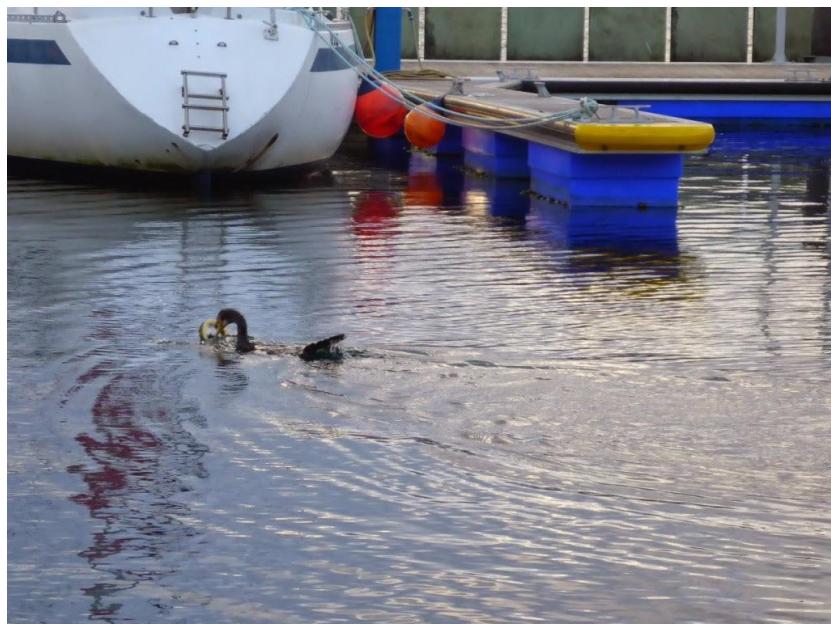


We had lunch there



Moaña. Vigo over there

We ordered fish, fries and salad but it was too much: the tapa served with beer would have been sufficient. You could choose between three tapas, cooked lentils, chicken or paella! We ate well so we took a long walk on foot to burn our calories and, later, we swam vigorously, water at 22 degrees. There are a few people on the beach but we're the only ones swimming. This morning we bought the famous "berzas" this plant that is seen in every garden. It is between cabbage and chard; it is good, especially with a little bit of cream. We spoke with an English couple on a yacht in the marina. They are here since June 2013!



He caught an eel

Tuesday, September 16, 2014. Moaña

Same weather and same weather forecast.

We remain in the boat this morning and go to the beach between showers. We are not alone, a man is picking up seaweed. Jens asked him what for and he replies that he is using them as fertilizer. He puts them in his garden now, and with the rain they will be rinsed of the salt they contain and in the spring they will be well absorbed into the ground. I did not have my camera; I am not yet back to my "blog-mode", carrying my camera always and everywhere. Two French yachts have arrived, one yesterday and one today. I spoke with one of the couples, they are from Sainte-Marine, where we spent some time in 2012, they go south, but the lady will fly back to France from Portugal and the husband will continue to the Canaries with two men who will join him when she leaves.

Lunch on the boat, then a long bike ride west along the sea to another town called Cangas, 4 km from here. The road goes up, then down. We have sun and good showers too. Cangas seems a lively town and has more links with Vigo than Moaña, by boat and by bus. We see the harbor and the marina then continue along the coast through small paths. It starts to rain and we take shelter under a tree. We see a huge building in ruins and ask some ladies what it was. It was a whale's treatment plant! The building doesn't seem very old, maybe from the fifties, very big and impressive. But everything is closed and abandoned now. It's sad to see but not so sad for the whales.



Cangas



We take shelter under a tree



The whale's treatment plant

We came home at 6 o'clock then it started to rain and it is still raining at 9 o'clock. And in Bergen the weather is very nice!

Wednesday, September 17, 2014. Moaña



Moaña

It rained the whole night and it rains most of the day. A French man comes to see us, not the one we talked about yesterday, another one, but coincidentally, they are both called Francis. A couple (the yesterday one) is called Francis and Nicole and the today couple, Francis and Yolande. Francis and Yolande are great sailors, they went to Madeira, the Azores, the Caribbean and especially he knows very well the Portuguese coast and recommends us several places in Portugal. He and Jens talk weather and agree that the wind will calm down and turn on Saturday or Sunday. But for now it's not nice at all. It is blowing and raining almost all the time. It is exceptional this bad weather in September here. When Francis is gone, we take a walk ... and it begins to rain cats and dogs again! We enter a bar and take a "clara" (beer and lemonade) watching a football match on sand and under the sun. It's not here!



Sun ... on TV

Lunch at the boat, newspaper, and work for Jens until 4 pm, then we take advantage of a short period without rain to go swimming. This is nice, the beach is deserted and the sea at 21 °. The beach is protected from the wind and there are only small waves.

We then bike, make a loop of one hour in a forest behind the town. It is uphill. A new neighborhood is overlooking the city but some apartments are empty and some buildings are not finished.

Thursday, September 18, 2014. Moaña

Big day for the Scots (referendum).

It's raining, and raining, all accompanied by strong wind gusts and the temperature is 17°. We thought about going to Baiona, a city in the same ría but further west, closer to the opening to the sea. But it will be later, we remain here for now. Even in the marina we can feel the waves and yet we are about fifteen miles inland. In the local newspaper, La Voz de Galicia, an article lists the damage of the storm, mainly floods and broken trees. We are inside most of the time but we go for a walk, well equipped, before lunch. We'll see the sea. Waves pass over the wall and come laden with seaweed on the street. It is raining and raining, it's gray and sad. The pictures don't look very happy today. We make a laundry and dry it in the dryer, there is no other solution. By late afternoon, the rain stops and Jens wants to go swimming. We go and it's true that it feels good. On our way we meet Francis and Yolande, they went to Vigo by the fast boat and are tired and wet. They think of leaving to Baiona on Saturday. Us, we'll see.



The waves are passing over the wall



On the beach in Spain!

Friday, September 19, 2014. Moaña-Baiona

Sorry, but it is the same story, rain, rain, and rain. It's amazing how it rains. And bad local news, the poor mussel growers can't sell their shells because there is bacteria in it that makes them unfit for consummation. We go shopping in the morning, with rain clothes from head to toe. But there is no wind, at least, so the waves are calming down. The weather is better for the afternoon so we decide to leave after lunch for Baiona. We pay the marina and thank them for the good service and their friendliness. We had a great time in Moaña but we are happy to leave. We also say goodbye to Francis-Nicole and Francis-Yolande. When we leave at 2:35 pm, it stopped raining, there is even a timid ray of sunshine and the sea is flat. But when we are backing from our place the wind picks up, the rain returns and the sea starts forming waves. And we have a very strong wind and waves from the front all along. It's not far, ten nautical miles (16 km) but we spend almost three hours to get there.



Against the wind between Moaña and Baiona



The waves

The waves are first one meter in average, but increase the closer we get to the opening of the ría and in addition, there they combine with the swell from the west. Maja is dancing well and the engine is working hard. Fortunately I have all stalled, yet I thought it would be a quiet crossing. The wind increases to force 5 then to force 6 and even 7 in the guts. What reassures me is that it's a short trip and at the end we will be protected from the land. But I confess I did not like it very much when the waves come from both sides. To avoid a detour that would be more exposed, we take a channel between an island and the land. In the guide, it is written that we can take it only in good visibility and calm weather. Visibility is not too bad (it is raining) and calm weather it is not. But the wind is oriented southeast, weaker near land, so here we go anyway. Also the tide is high, which helps where there is a shoal. It goes well, but it's impressive to see the sea crashing on the rocks a few meters from us.



Impressive ... and so close



We finally arrive in Baiona, Jens phoned and a guy is waiting for us and shows us our place. Whew! Very happy to arrive. This marina is much more international than Moaña. We see an American yacht, English, a Dane, a Norwegian and a Swiss Fisher. Some boats are anchored near the marina. We register and we take a walk in town. It stopped raining, finally. Baiona is a very old city and has the glory of being the first port in continental Europe which learned about the new world in 1493 when Christopher Columbus made a stop there on the way back from America. A replica of the caravel "La Pinta" is in the port. We swim at a beach near the port, but it's not very nice, there are algae. We say hello to the Swiss Fisher, the Swiss couple looks very sympathetic. It is a Fisher 25, smaller than ours. Dinner inside, it is too windy to eat outside.

Moaña-Baiona : 10 nm (18 km)

Florvåg-baiona : $1\ 409 + 10 = 1\ 419$ nm (2 554 km)

Saturday, September 20, 2014. Baiona

It's raining here too. We stay on the boat, read the newspaper and at 11 am Jens goes to visit the Swiss Fisher 25. He remains long there then returns along with Fritz and Margret, the Swiss couple and two Germans, Owe and Thomas, who were also visiting the Swiss Fisher.



Jeannette, Margret



Fritz, Uwe, Thomas

We offer coffee to everybody and spend a good time together. It's always nice to meet different people but all sailors, everyone has a special or funny experience to tell. When they left, we have lunch and then go on bike westward to the sea. It stopped raining but it is blowing a strong wind. The sea is calm in the bay but the "bigl" sea is all white. We ride along the coast and see a lighthouse that we will pass when we leave.



The light house

On returning, we meet Fritz and Margret who go swimming on a small beach. We bathe together, but I don't take pictures because the battery in my camera is empty. We really sympathize. When we are the four of us together we speak French, although they are Swiss German. Margret also like to find pieces of glass polished by the sea, it brings us together. We

invite them to dinner tonight. We return to the boat, Jens goes shopping and I do the blog. Jens makes a pizza and I make a salad. They arrive at 7:30 pm and we spend a very pleasant evening. They went through canals and the river Seine from Switzerland to Le Havre, rounded the tip of the Cotentin peninsula, went to the Channel Islands, then Brittany, crossed the Bay of Biscay and arrived in Spain, all this on a smaller boat than ours and this is their first big trip at sea. Well done. We sympathize well and we hope to see them again. Tonight the weather is fine, finally.

Sunday, September 21. Baiona

Beautiful weather. We think that we deserve it after all the rain we had. We are far from land in the marina so we are riding on the pontoon. We visit La Pinta, the reproduction of one of the caravels of Christopher Columbus.



We must carry the bikes up



La Pinta

The hull is very high, but the lower part is low and dark. Then we go on bike this time to the east, along the bay. It's Sunday and the boardwalk and bike path are occupied. We go to about 7 km on a sandy beach. Many families are on the beach but there are not so many people in the water. People walk along the sea, it's a real stampede, and they walk fast, it must be their exercise.



People are walking along the beach

We swim and it's very nice to swim parallel to the beach. Lunch at the boat and at 3 pm, we swim again with Margret and Fritz at the same small beach as yesterday, under the fortifications. The waves are bigger here and there are rocks under the water, the men swim well but we women, are more "careful". In return, we find Margret and myself many beautiful pieces of glass.



Margret, Jens, Fritz

They invite us to take a drink at 5 am on "Longway" their boat. And what appetizer! Cheese, jamon serrano, boiled eggs, carrots, nuts, cake etc and with good drink, of course. This serves as our meal. Before, they had a Corsair, a plywood boat of 5.5m and went on holiday with it on Swiss lakes with their two children. Their Fisher 25 has a much wider cockpit than ours in the back and a nice canvas to overshadow it. We spend again a great time together. They and we are leaving tomorrow: good weather forecast, little wind and small waves.



Margret, Jeannette, Fritz



"Longway", their Fisher 25

Monday, September 22, 2014. Póvoa de Varzim (Portugal)

We see Longway leaving at 8:20 am and we leave at 9:20 am. We must get out of the Bay of Baiona and turn south on the "great sea." The weather is a little gray at first, then very good weather, little wind from southeast and no wave. Even the swell, which can be impressive here, is very small. We are not the only ones to sail south, several yachts are going the same way. Navigation is very relaxed, in the sun, I can even make sudokus. The only "danger" is pots (lobster or crab) improperly marked. Some just have a small plastic container that floats. Most of them have a vertical stick and a small flag, but sometimes lack the flag or the stick is half sunk. It's hard to see them, and yet it's nice weather and calm seas. What it must be like when there are waves and poor visibility ... The danger is to pass on them and to take a rope in the propeller. We must change course several times to avoid them. We pass the estuary of the river that marks the border between Spain and Portugal and I change the courtesy flag.



Portuguese courtesy flag

We navigate along the coast which is built almost everywhere. I take a nap in the afternoon and during that time, Jens made contact, directly, shouting, (and I didn't hear it!) with a German yacht passing nearby. The two captains took pictures of each other. The German captain then calls Jens by radio later to give him his mail so Jens can send him photos of his boat. We hear several messages from the Spanish authorities that require a boat's position and where she goes. A lady from the sailboat answered (in English) and it started again one hour later. Why? Mystery. Longway stops in Viana do Castelo, Portugal, at around 3 pm. We continue to Póvoa de Varzim and we are getting there at 7:40 pm (Spanish time) or 8:40 (Portuguese time). It is a fishing port and also a marina. But this is not a small fishing village, we are surprised by the sight of large buildings on several kilometers along a long beach. We even see a casino.



Póvoa de Varzim

The welcome at the marina is nice, there is room and almost all boats are foreigners, including several American yachts. It is quite late, we are a little tired and we eat in town. It's dark but we feel that we are not in Spain anymore. We had been to The Azores in 2010, and it reminds us of them. Same style of houses, sometimes covered with earthenware tiles, same small square pavers on sidewalks, same system of several doors if a house has several apartments, and of course, same language. The city looks big, part "real" and part tourist area. A metro

goes from here to Porto. In the restaurant, the TV is showing the news: important flood in Lisboa, streets transformed in rivers, cars taken by the water ... and the weather is so nice and calm here.

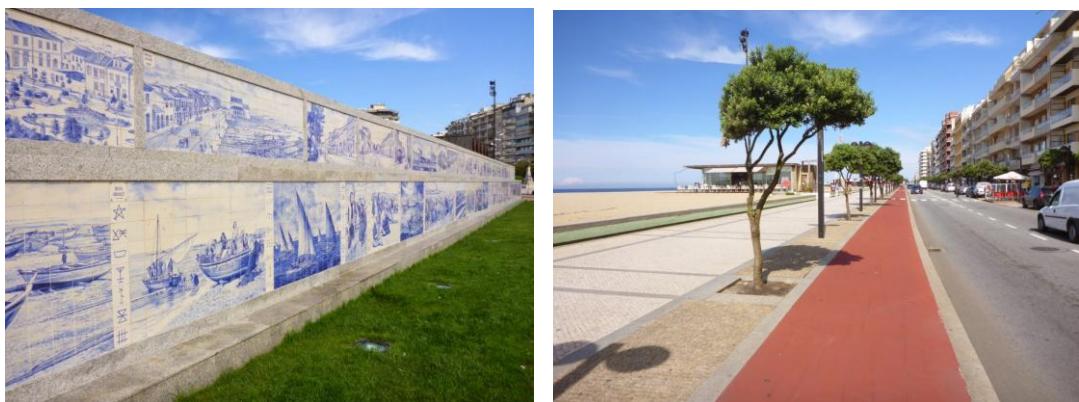
Happy and tired, we go to bed to sleep our first night in Portugal.

Baiona-Povoa de Varzim : 48 nm (86 km)

Florvåg-Povoa de Varzim : $1\ 419 + 48 = 1\ 467$ nm (2 640 km)

Tuesday September 23, 2014. Póvoa de Varzim

We wake to the sound of the foghorn. We take our time, the sun appears, Jens will recognize the city and I do the blog. Then we go down to the sea. A very long walk and a bike path go along the sea and all along are blocks of apartments for holiday. Music surrounds us. First I think it comes from the many bars but no, it comes out streetlights! Each lamp has a microphone and broadcast songs. A real noise pollution.



Mosaic and bike path

We bathe, and drink a clara in a bar on the beach, here it is called a "panache", like in French. We take a sandwich, return to the boat and set off again to explore the countryside. And we get lost, we take small paved roads, not very comfortable on bike and turn and turn. The people are friendly when asked our way, but we have a language problem, and to crown it all, it starts to rain.



This way



Under the tunnel

We take shelter in a tunnel under the highway and wait, it doesn't. We return to the sea and we swim again. When we come back, the man that had contacted Jens yesterday and took pictures of Maja arrived here too. We invite them to drink tea after dinner. They are called Uwe and Anne, are German and their boat is "Anduril", if I understand rightly it is the name of a sword in "The Lord of the Rings." They give us pictures of Maja and Jens gives them pictures of Andureil. Another nice moment.



Anne, Uwe

Wednesday, September 24, 2014. Póvoa de Varzim

Today it's my turn to go alone for a ride. I'll see the harbor, the old town and the market. There I buy some tomatoes and the lady speaks to me in French, she lived 30 years in France. I get home and we go to swim, there are more waves today. After lunch we want to take the metro to Porto. The idea is to take the bikes on the metro but we can't find the lights that we put on the bikes. We are looking all over the boat, nothing. So we start walking to take the

subway half an hour later. We descend to the Trindade station in Porto and walk to the river Douro.



Mero station Trindade

Porto is beautiful, very busy and much focused on its river and port wine, of course. The port is prohibited to yachts but two old Norwegian sailing yachts are here all the same. They are photographed by tourists and attract people, so they can stay. We do not see the Norwegian sailors, they are inside the boats. In a street we hear shouts and songs: it is a kind of baptism of new students who begin the school year, some are dressed in yellow, others in red and others in black with a cape.



The students. Porto

We walk along the Douro and have a coffee on a terrace overlooking the river. We leave and go up stairs (good we don't have the bikes!) to go a square with a big church and palace of the bishopric. A newly married couple is photographed by a professional photographer and he shows the young woman how to take a "sexy" pose.



The sexy bride

Going down in a small street, people have chickens. We see them return to their "house", a kind of very small box. The owner chases them inside with her broom.



The hens



“Our” café. Porto

We dine at the same small cafe on the terrace and take, of course a glass of port wine. It's good. Then several tapas, very good and cheap. Back to the same metro station, tired, and

back to Povoa de Varzim. When a woman's voice announces the stop, we hear something like "Pov d'vzim"! Fortunately it is also written on a screen. Upon arrival, a young German woman asks us if we speak English and asks the way to the marina. We then walk together; she will join her husband and son on a yacht. She contacted us because she thought Jens looked like a sailor. Jens is very happy with that appreciation.

Thursday, September 25, 2014 and Friday, September 26, 2014. Póvo de Varzim-Nazaré

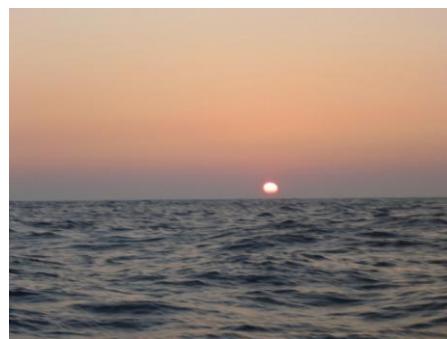
A yacht in the marina has a flag that I don't recognize. So I ask the young woman who comes out of it what country it is: Luxembourg! We talk a bit together and I say we're leaving. Her husband said to me, "You're leaving? The weather is not good." I don't understand, we watched with Jens and it seemed correct, little wind first from the east so from the north. He explains then: "There would be not enough wind for us!" Different way to look at things...

We start at 9:20 am, calm seas and little wind ... in the harbor. The wind picks up as soon as we come out, pretty strong and from East, and Maja is heeling well. I'm a little surprised, but Jens says it will not last. And yes, after three hours of good wind, it calms down and we keep going very nicely.



Nice sea and good wind

We are the first to go, several yachts are also headed south. They're all going faster than us and soon we are the last. We remain parallel with a sailboat "Aquaria" long into the night. But this sailboat didn't come from Póvoa. In the afternoon, the wind, from the north is low. Jens wants to hoist the gennaker but gets confused with the strings and can't do it. The wind drops, the speed too. But from the start we think of doing a long leg if the weather is good. And Aveiro, the first opportunity to stop is not a marina but an anchorage in a lagoon. We pass it at around 7 pm and we don't feel to go there as night begins to fall.



Red sky ...

We continue. We eat a soup from Coop and, surprise, we find the bikes light ... in the box with the chocolate when we look for a little sweet! We have a beautiful sunset and a very red sky (Red sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky in the morning, sailor take warning) We take our watches. I am steering and Jens tries to sleep from 8 pm to 10 pm and then we change every two hours.



At night

The night is beautiful, the sky full of stars, we even see the Milky Way. We are sailing, we are afraid that in the dark the propeller can catch a lobster pot. Good night, Maja rolls a bit with the swell, but it's bearable. We see fishing boats with their big projector. At 5 am, the wind died completely. Jens starts the engine at low speed and we continue. If we feel a little shock or squeal on the side (from a lobster pot), we must quickly shift to neutral. But everything is going well. The sun rises at around 7 am. We have breakfast at 9 am, in the sun.



Breakfast in the sun

The coast is now like a long beach and behind there is a long cliff. We arrive at 1:15 pm at the port of Nazaré, a pretty white town at the bottom of a bay.



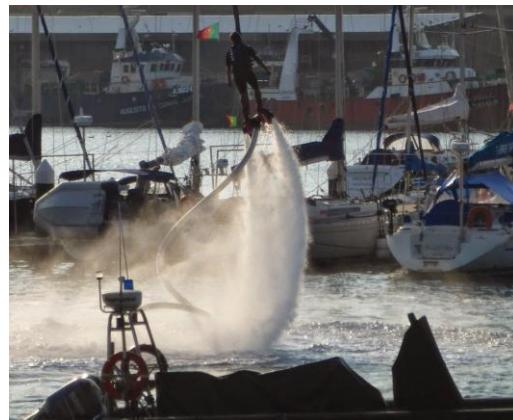
Arrival at Nazaré

We eat our lunch and we ride to the town (2 km) and to the beach. Jens holds my hand to get through the first wave and then it's fine.



The funicular. Nazaré

When I ride back to Maja, I see a funny thing: a man standing on a strong stream of water in the air. Difficult to explain, but I took pictures. See down.



Povoa de Varzim-Nazaré: 93 nm (167 km)
Florvåg-Nazaré : $1\ 467 + 93 = 1\ 560$ nm (2 808 km)

Saturday, September 27, 2014. Nazaré

Jens rides his bike to buy bread, the city is about 2 km from here. At around 11 am we have the visit of Uwe and Dorothea, the crew of Aquaria. We know Uwe from Baiona, when he came on Maja with Margret, Fritz and Thomas. But this is the first time that we meet Dorothea.



Dorothea and Uwe

They have sailed much and long, even to the Caribbean. They know the coast of Portugal and Atlantic Spain and show us many interesting places on the map. Then we go to visit Aquaria, 32 feet. Very good boat, nice and, a rarity, she has an electric motor. We go home and eat lunch and leave to visit a little the town by bike. Nazaré has a rather special plan: many narrow, parallel streets go down to the sea, and the streets are only separated by the width of a (small) house. Then we take the funicular, with our bikes.



Nazaré seen from the top of the funicular

At the top, the view is magnificent. We're going to the fort and ride back down to the town at a good speed, it's steep. We are ready to go swimming when the sky turns all black and a thunderstorm breaks out.



The thunderstorm is coming ...

Now it's here

We pedal like madmen to go back to the boat. We get a few drops but the serious rain starts when we arrive at the dock. Whew! And it starts raining like crazy. Dinner at the boat inside. It's dark as in November but it is "koselig" (warm, pleasant) in the boat.

Sunday, September 28, 2014. Nazaré

The good weather is back. We're going on foot to see the beach south of the harbor. We pass a wall where visitors by boat make a painting, as in Horta in the Azores. Uwe and Dorothea made a painting in 1993 and have added a new date each time: 1993, 2002 and now 2014. The beach where we go have a big wave and no one can swim. But two guys are surfing. We then ride into town and go to the market. Women of Nazaré are famous for their costume and they still wear it. They have seven petticoats and skirts and these are short. The colors are bright and the overskirt is often like the material in Scotland.



A lady wearing the traditional costume

Old ladies have the same costume but in black. And on the head they wear either a scarf or a kind of turban like women in Martinique.



The same costume in black

We meet Dorothea and chat a bit. We go swimming but nobody swims topless here, so I put on an old bikini bought ... forty years ago. We lunch at the boat and I work a little on the blog. Jens is on the pontoon and suddenly he calls me. I go out and, surprise, a boat is coming in, "Longway" with Fritz and Margret. We are all happy to see each other. And they don't come alone, they are with "Conquistador." They talked before about this boat they had met several times. So now we meet her crew, Jacob and Vicky, two young Danes. Finally a young couple! The majority of people who travel by boat like us are sixty or older. Jacob and Vicky, with the biggest boat (44 feet), invite us all to a drink. They bought the boat 6 years, in bad shape. They worked 6 years for restoring her and make her presentable and then they left. We spend a good time together and Jens suggest we all eat together making a "pot luck", each of us

bringing something. Uwe and Dorothea, who return from Nazaré, are invited too. So here we are at 7:30 pm on Conquistador and we will remember for a long time this dinner and this good evening. Thank you to all.



Jens, Fritz, Margret



Vickie, Jacob



Dorothea, Uwe

Monday, September 29, 2014. Berlenga Island

Great weather, very quiet. Two port officials come to us to ask all our documents, personal and from the boat. They are nice and speak good English. Fritz and Margret come to say goodbye and we leave at 9 am. It is so quiet that we decide to go to an island, opposite the port of Peniche, the island of Berlenga. The guide said that one should go there only by very calm weather. We motor, there is not a breath. Calm day, relax, just a little swell rocks us, and we nap in turn. We admire the graceful movements of a group of dolphins and this would make a grumpy person smile. We arrive at Berlenga at 1:30 pm. Not another sailboat in sight. We are approaching a passenger boat at a mooring where a man is fishing. Jens asks if he speaks English, no, but he speaks a little Spanish. Jens wonders if we can anchor, he said yes and even better offers us a mooring.



Berlenga Island



Delphins



Berlenga

There are only three moorings southeast of the island, under a cliff, two strong enough and the third one for a small boat. What luck. So we pick up the mooring and we eat our lunch. Then we go ashore with the tender. The island is wild, the arid rocks are pink and is home to a colony of seagulls. Some fisher houses built in the twenties by a benefactor, all white, are now used as holiday homes. In the sixteenth century, a monastery was on the island and was regularly raided by pirates. A fort was built to defend the monastery. The monastery has disappeared but the fort is still there. We pull the tender on the small beach and we swim, the water is at least 22 ° and the water is very clear. The island is a nature park, so we must follow the trail and are not allowed to pick flowers or disturb birds. We climb to the lighthouse, we admire Maja from afar and descend. At 5 pm, the passenger boat (the one which was at the mooring) picks up the tourists and leave to Peniche, so we have the island to ourselves. It is so quiet that we decide to stay tonight here. We return on Maja, I work on the blog and Jens makes dinner. Maja rolls, small waves come to us on the side, but it's bearable. Very romantic dinner, but I can't say calm: the seagulls are squawking and the waves breaking on the rocks are making a great noise. All is well ... if we knew what to expect tonight! To be continued.



Maja moored. Berlenga



Berlenga



Romantic dinner ...

Nazaré-Berlenga : 19 nm (34 km)

Florvåg-Berlenga : $1\ 560 + 19 = 1\ 579$ nm (2 842 km)

Tuesday, September 30, 2014. Cascais

So we go to bed and we feel pretty quickly that the waves are becoming bigger, Maja rolls and rolls more. It's funny, the wind is from the northwest and we are sheltered southeast. But the waves must run around the island and take us on the east side. The movement is so important that we must hold on for not falling out of bed, and the two berths in the front have no handles because we never use them at sea. Everything is crashing and moving, and yet it was stalled. Jens is still asleep but not me. It's very dark, but every 8 seconds the lighthouse emits a powerful white glow. And the sarabande continues. At around 3 am, the tide has turned a little and the tender which is tied behind Maja is very close to hitting a lobster pot. Jens wakes up, assesses the situation and decides to take the tender back on Maja. Easier said than done. Maja is rolling but the tender is jumping in all directions. We pull it parallel to Maja and Jens goes down in it. I keep it with a rope but it moves a lot anyway and knocks Maja. I try to put a fender between Maja and the tender, but it hits either above or below the fender. Jens stands with one hand on Maja and the other trying to detach the oars which are secured to avoid falling into the water. It's more like a rodeo than anything else. After two minutes, I order him (!) to come back on Maja,



Jens puts his harness on his pajamas

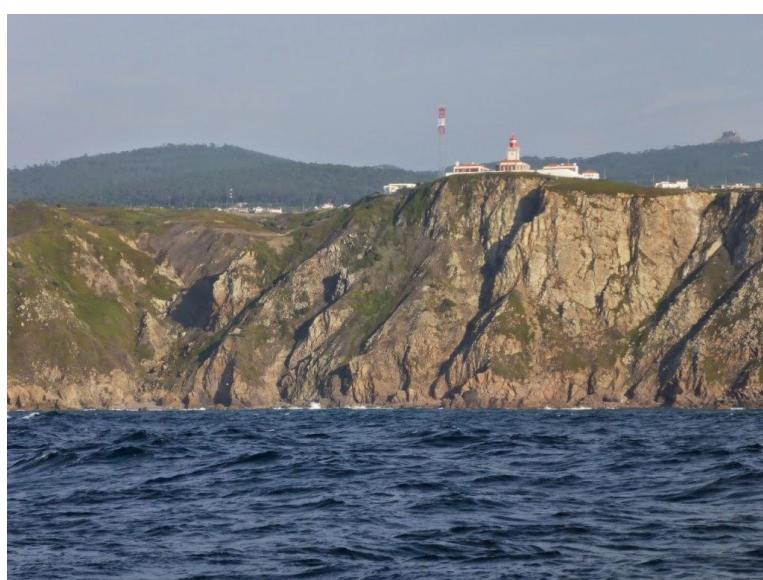
I don't want to lose my man in Berlenga. He goes up and gets an idea: he'll put on his harness. So he put his harness on his pajamas (he has rolled up its legs), secures the harness on Maja and returns in the tender. He managed to give me the oars, oarlocks and the scoop. Good. He goes up on Maja and we manage to pull the tender on Maja. We go back to bed but it's a night with little sleep. We leave at 9: 30 am, with a bright sun and a strong wind from the north-northwest, force 4-5, with peaks up to 6. We will sail all day with jib and mizaine, wind at 10 to 20 degrees to the side and we have good speed.



Good wind, good speed

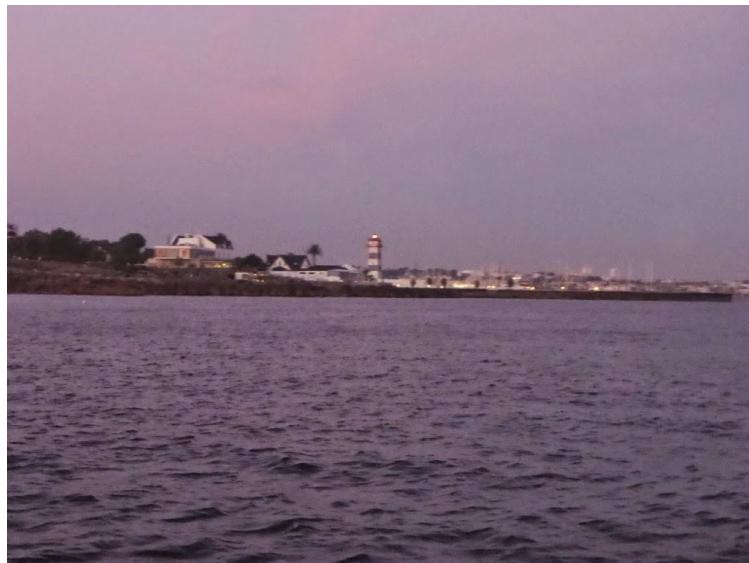


The waves



Cabo da Roca

The waves are a bit big but regular, raising Maja from behind and passing underneath her. A very good day of sailing. We can't do anything so we listen to music. We pass the Cabo da Roca (furthest west point in Europe) and the Cabo Raso and turn the corner to go east towards Lisbon. It's late and we stop in Cascais, just after "the corner." It is 7:45 pm and the marina office closes at 8. We are lucky, starting tomorrow, October 1st, it will close at 6 pm. We tie Maja and go for a walk in town that seems Mediterranean and even so late, it is still hot. Cascais is a posh seaside resort since the King of Portugal made it his holiday town in the nineteenth century and today is very touristy. The marina has several upscale restaurants, with butler and servants in long aprons. No, no, we didn't dine there. We go into town and eat well for half the price.



Arrival in Cascais when night is falling

Berlenga-Cascais : 47 nm (84 km)

Florvåg-Cascais : $1\ 579 + 47 = 1\ 626$ nm (2 926 km)

Wednesday, 1 October 2014. Cascais-Lisbon



Cascais

Nice and warm. Uwe and Dorothea arrived here too on their Aquaria and make a laundry. We, we go to walk a little in the city, have a coffee in the shade and then go for a swim. We take diesel, we have not taken it from San Vicente do Mar on the 14 August, and we continue to Lisbon. We leave at 1 pm and have lunch under way. It's hot, 28 °. It's special to arrive in a big city by sea. An oceanographic research vessel that passes near us is called Noruega! (Norway). We see the two forts that guarded Lisbon, the Torre de Belem, the Monument to the Discoveries, the great Jesus on the south bank of the Tagus River and the large metallic bridge 25 de Abril. The double traffic on the bridge (train and cars) makes an incredible metallic din.



Torre de Belen



Monument to the Discoveries



Arrival in Lisbon. The bridge 25 do Abril

We motor a little after the bridge and got in the marina de Alcântara, a former dock turned into a marina. A footbridge should open to let boats go in and we don't wait more than 5 minutes, tied on a small green tug.



The footbridge

And here I must confess my fault: I lost the gaff (a big stick with a hook on the end) and it sunk so quickly that we didn't have time to recover it. The marina is very large and we are placed among the Portuguese boats. The area is an old industrial neighborhood turned into an area of promenade, cafes and restaurants. But with the crisis it is hardly busy. After dinner we walk a little on the pontoons and see a sailboat with a name from Bergen!



Cascais-Lisbon : 13 nm (23 km)

Florvåg-Lisbon : $1\ 626 + 13 = 1\ 639$ nm (2 950 km)

Thursday, October 2, 2014. Lisbon

Jens rides to give our laundry at a launderette, carrying two large bags of clothes on his bike and then we go to visit Lisbon.



Jens takes the laundry to the launderette

The marina is 3 km from the old center, straight and flat bike path, all along the sea (or the Tagus, or a mixture of both). It is very hot, 30 °.



Praça do Comércio. Lisbon



The famous tram.

We are not the only tourists, we hear lots of different languages, specially French. We leave the bikes and climb through small streets and even stairs aimlessly. We go up, go up and get to a place with a beautiful view of the city. We descend by turning right and left and fortunately, we find ourselves in a square where it smells like grilled sardines at a small restaurant.



The small restaurant

It's time for lunch, so it is just the right time. Unfortunately, the "grill man" makes us understand that there is no more fish done. But we see in the plate of a client some pretty

skewers. We sit under the pergola and savor the food and the atmosphere. All people know each others, it is not clear who is the customer, who is a waiter, an old lady is serving then sits at a table with customers. It's like a village. It's good, hearty, friendly and we pay for two full meals, 19 € (152 kr). Happy, we return to the boat but we had closed the windows this morning! It is 36 ° inside. We open all of them and the door, put the "bimini" on, the kind of fabric that makes shade in the cockpit, we undress, and then we work, Jens in seismology (but he falls asleep!) and me with the blog.

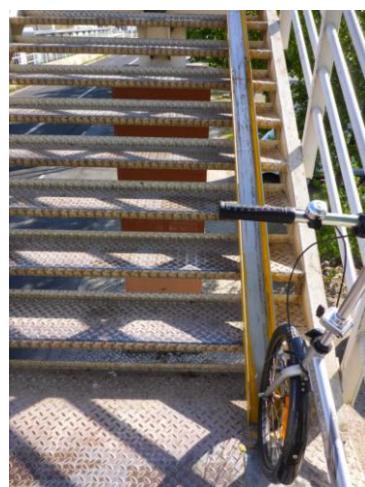


It's hot!

We walk to the launderette in the late evening, walking through a poor neighborhood, behind the marina. Dinner tonight is salad and yogurt.

Friday, October 3, 2014. Lisbon

Today Jens goes to visit a seismologist colleague at the University and I want to see a botanical garden. Freedom of maneuver. We leave each on our own, Jens in a taxi to the east and I on my bike to the west. Also on this side there is a good bike path along the sea-river. I pedal to the monument of discoveries and turn right to climb a hill to the garden. But you have to cross two busy roads and railway lines. I must therefore take the stairs and a walkway. Fortunately a system helps push the bike up the stairs, that's really smart.



Smart to push a bike up

I come across roads and railway lines, through a park where a pagoda is shining and see a huge Gothic building, a former monastery. And right next to it the "Jardim Botanico tropical". This is not what I wanted to see but I'll visit it anyway. Large garden, shady, well maintained, where a class is visiting. The children are playing among the bamboos, cedars and other trees and seem thrilled. Peacocks strut and ducks swim on a small lake. Then I continued up the hill and want to go to see the other "Jardim Botanico." It's hot and it goes up, up, I push my bike, no question pedaling. I get to the "Rua do Jardim Botanico" and then I hesitated should I turn left or right, up or down? I go to the left and continue to go up. I ask an old local lady, with her shopping bag, and she shows me the top of the hill, so I go up and up. The street is steep and in full sun, not a scrap of shade and it's 30 °. I reach the top and I ask confirmation to a woman bus driver. And then, to my surprise, she tells me to go down the whole street, the garden is down! Why did the old lady showed me the wrong way? All this work for nothing! The descent refreshes me, the wind speed is fresh and the effort is zero. And, finally, I manage to find the Jardim Botanico. This garden is also nice and there still has flowers, but the best season is over.



Botanical garden

I take many pictures; therefore I have a reserve of flower pictures for later on.



The bike path along the Tagus

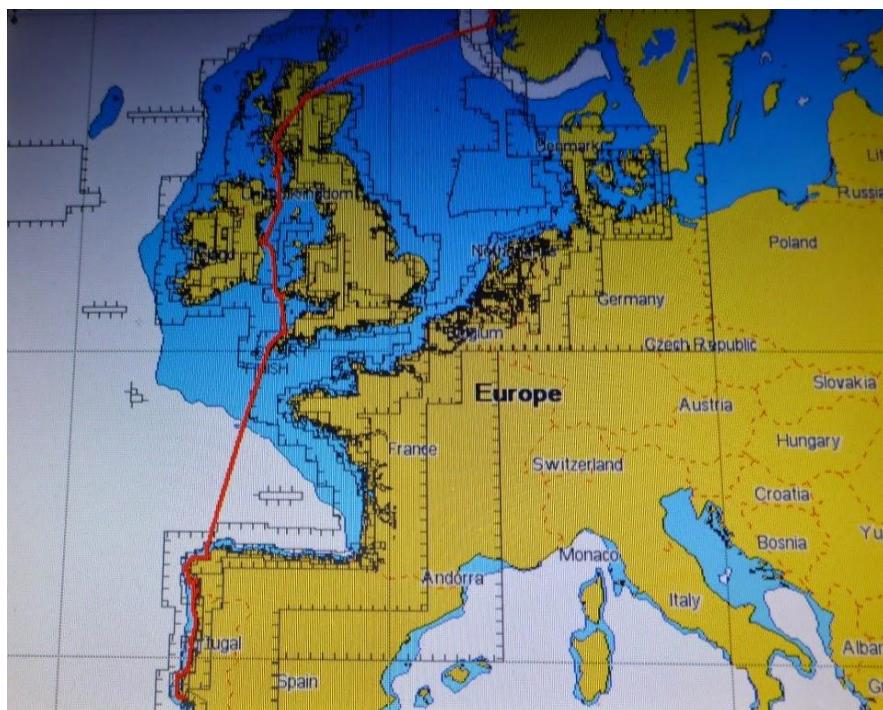
Back to Maja, then Jens is back too, a little bit of shopping, and we notice in the marina an Irish boat we saw in early August in Camarina, "Granuaile" . We visit them and they invite us for a drink. We invite them to drink coffee after dinner.



Richard and Eilish

We have dinner of leftovers; we try to empty the fridge: we leave tomorrow, Jens to give a SEISAN class during one week in Bogota (Colombia) and me to visit the family in Bergen. Eilish and Richard come to Maja after dinner. He built his boat completely in 8 years, and they have already sailed to the Caribbean and are on their way there again. What an experience. We spend a good time together and then to bed. Tomorrow is tidying, cleaning, and saying goodbye to Maja and then taxi to the airport.

The blog takes a break. We come back on Sunday evening, October 12 th and the blog will resume on October 14 th. See you later.



Our trace Florvåg-Lisbon

Monday, October 13, 2014. Lisbon

So here we are again, arrived yesterday afternoon under a pouring rain. And so it goes, rain and wind from the south. Richard, Eilish and their boat "Granuaile" are still here and the "Longway" of Fritz and Margret arrived here too. Yesterday, armed with rain clothes and umbrellas, we went shopping: the supermarket "Pingo Doce" is open on Sundays. After dinner, Fritz and Margret invited us to a drink. Fritz got robbed on a tram and yet he had a bag on his stomach and with a belt. We slept very well last night. This morning we, courageously, put on our boots, rain clothes and took our umbrella and went walking around the neighborhood. To go under a major intersection one must use an underpass which is also a train station, the station Alcâncara, I think. This passage is decorated with primitive paintings. Out on the other side, we found ourselves in an old neighborhood dominated by the bridge 25 abril. This bridge is suspended above the Tagus River but continues on big "legs" for several kilometers on land too.



The bridge

We walk and walk and pass a beautiful park. A guard told us that this is private but that we can go in. This park belongs to a Botanical Institute. The old main building and the greenhouse are not well maintained. We received a message this morning: Hans and Ragnhild, our good Danish friends arrive in Lisbon today. What a nice surprise! I hope we'll see each other. Tonight, we invite Fritz, Margret, Richard and Eilish for dinner. Jens does the shopping, and tell me when he is back that there was a power cut and that some streets were flooded. I put a big chicken in the oven with potatoes, plus a good salad, it will be good. Jens makes a chocolate mousse as a dessert. We spend a very nice evening, interesting with different boat experiences. Jens, while in Bogota, had a student from Dominica, a small independent island in the Caribbean. Richard and Eilish had been there on their boat and have good memories of it. We manage to take a picture of us six: Jens puts the camera on one of the handles which we grab when Maja is moving a lot!



Jeannette, Richard, Eilish, Margret, Fritz and Jens

Tuesday, October 14, 2014. Lisbon



Pavement work

Gray morning, so we stay in the boat to "work", then we go on bike to the center to meet Hans, Ragnhild and their two friends.



Hans and Ragnhild

We have a little trouble finding each others, they took a tram that was stuck somewhere because a car was across the street. They tell us later that four men came down from the tram and lifted the car! They arrive shortly after at the Santa Apolonia train station where we are. We have lunch together at a small restaurant near the train station, on the terrace, good and cheap. The sun came out and it will be sunny all afternoon. All the four of them want to watch TV tonight: Portugal and Denmark are confronting each other ... in football. We are happy to see each other and invite them to dinner tomorrow night on Maja. Jens and I set off again to ride in the city. We are at a time ... in China! Almost everything is written in Chinese, the people are Chinese, the products are Chinese. Lisbon is truly a city of contrasts: beautiful old monuments and ex-beautiful dilapidated monuments. We return to the boat, a little tired.



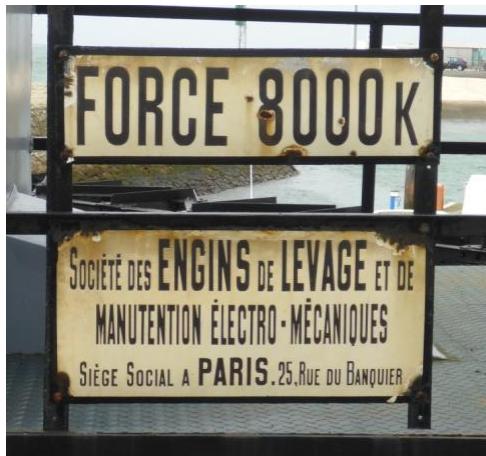
Ex-beautiful monument

Wednesday, October 15, 2014. Lisbon



Bicycling along the Tagus

Still gray this morning, we go on bike westward along the Tagus. We see again the Belem Tower and the Monument to the Discoveries that we had seen when arriving by boat early in October. We continue along the river which is very wide. A strong west wind is blowing and we have to pedal hard against it.



An old French crane on the quai

We pass two beautiful modern buildings; one is a conference center and the other a center for cancer research. We come to a small beach and ... I found lots of broken glass, well polished. The sun comes out and it's hot. Back "downwind", lunch out on Maja, 24 ° but the wind is still strong. Jens wants to make dinner tonight, a fish dish in the oven with potatoes, tomatoes and onions. I make the salad and dessert will be six delicious cakes which Fritz and Margret brought on Monday, the "pasteis de nata", cream tarts. Jens goes shopping and wants to buy Portuguese fish, but there is no more fresh fish. The lady advises him to buy frozen fish. Jens asked whether it is Portuguese, yeah, yeah, sure, sure. But when he reads the label he realizes that this is fish from Vietnam and worse, from a fish farm, and even worse full of E 100, E 200 and E 300 and others E 000 ... He does not want it and finally buys Norwegian cod! A Portuguese man who has a motor sailor in the marina comes to see Maja. Friendly and chatty, he explains a little the situation in Portugal. It seems that corruption is as common here as in Spain. Hans, Ragnhild, Maria and Jan arrive at 7 pm and we spend a great evening, good company, good food and good wine (Portuguese) and even good music: Maria had brought a CD of fado.



Ragnhild, Jan, Maria and Hans

PS: Portugal beat Denmark yesterday, 1-0.

Thursday, October 16, 2014. Lisbon

We had planned to leave today but Jens notices that one of the batteries does not charge, it is kaput. So we have to buy a new one. He asked the marina office and is told that there is a battery store not far from here. He goes there by bike but they do not have the type of batteries he wants. The guy has to go and get one somewhere else in town and offers to take Jens with him. They charge the bike behind the van and leave. The guy takes the opportunity to deliver two batteries and Jens therefore visits the city as well. They go for the battery and deliver it on the door to the marina. It weighs at least 35 kg. But Fritz loaned Jens a devil, a cart for carrying heavy things, and that's it. Jens changes the battery and during that time I'll do a bike ride to the west. I see again the Monastery of San Geronimo, huge, an Electricity Museum (just from outside) and turn around a little.



San Geronimo Monastery

The wind is strong, from the southwest. I return to the din that is under the bridge: it's amazing, traffic passes on grids that are noisy and in addition, many trains also travel on the floor below. Add in heavy planes traffic, low in the sky and our heads are full of incessant noise. We want to leave but the wind is strong and against us. We'll see tomorrow.

Friday, October 17, 2014. Oeiras



Bye, bye Fritz and Margret

We are invited to breakfast at Fritz and Margret, and what breakfast, a real brunch really. Fritz and Jens talk much radio (Fritz is ham radio) and computer. Margret shows me a very nice children's book she illustrated; the book, like her, is very friendly. Another good warm moment on "Longway" then it's time for us to say goodbye.



Bye, bye Lisbon

We're leaving. Fritz and Margret put their boat ashore and fly to Switzerland at the end of the month. But we hope to meet again in the Mediterranean next spring when they will start to navigate again. I tidy up inside so everything is secure while Jens is going to pay and we pass the footbridge when it opens at 11 am. The sky is gray and the wind is still strong, but we are not going very far, at Oeiras, a marina to the west in the Tagus estuary, between Lisbon and Cascais, just 7 miles (12 km). We take the same way we did in early October. The first part, up to the fort in the middle of the estuary (Forte Bugio) is not too hectic. We are going with the motor with a tiny bit of jib to stabilize. The waves are short enough and arrive at both front and three-quarter front. Maja is dancing well. But after the protection of the sand bank that Forte Bugio marks, this is another story. The waves come right from the sea and are larger.



The waves

Fortunately it's not long, 10 minutes ... which seem 100! Jens reassures me by showing me a small boat fishing, but they are Portuguese, direct descendant of navigators who discovered distant lands, which I am not.



The small fishing boat

The harbor entrance is narrow, the waves are big and there is current. Jens is in the middle but the current pushes us to the pier on the right, he must accelerate hard and it goes well. What a relief to be in port! Here it's all quiet.



It's all quiet in the harbor

We register and receive lots of presents: a bag, maps of the city and the region and even a complimentary drink at a café on the port and in addition they deliver fresh bread every morning to each boat. We find Jacob and Vicky stuck here for two weeks. Uwe and Dorothea are waiting for better weather in Cascais. The weather this summer and early fall is quite unusual. Normally the north wind predominates but this year it is the south wind which blows continuously for a long time. Everyone talks a lot about weather, this is an important issue for all these navigators. And all agree that Sunday, the wind will turn. We'll see.

Lisbon-Oeiras : 12 nm (21 km)

Florvåg-Oeiras : $1\ 639 + 12 = 1\ 651$ nm (2 971 km)

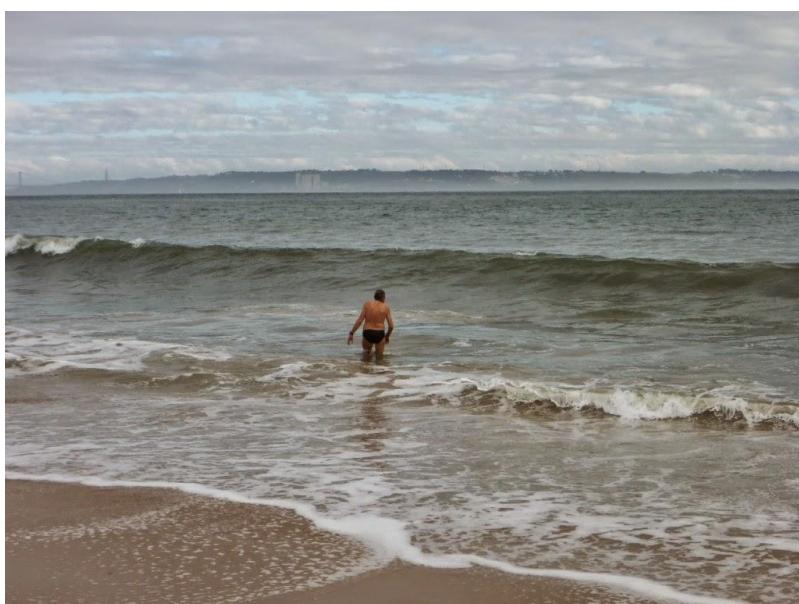
Saturday, October 18, 2014. Oeiras

Still gray and south wind. We ride in the Old Town to buy food. To get there, we must ride along the beach on the promenade and reach an underpass, 1 km or so, to go under the highway and then we ride up, pass under a railway bridge and finally reach the center. Fortunately we have the bikes, it is quite long. We buy enough for a good lunch because Jacob and Vickie come to eat with us. A Finnish boat left this morning, they should be in Madeira on Friday to catch a flight. We spend a good time with our guests.



Vickie, Jacob

Their plan is to go to Madeira and the Canaries and then back to the Mediterranean. In front of us a Danish boat prepares to depart tomorrow for Madeira, the Canaries and the Caribbean. By late afternoon, Jens wants to swim, but it's grey, there are waves, I do not want to swim.



Jens goes swimming, not me

We dine of tapas, very good that we take with our free drinks. After dinner, we walk along the sea. Back on Maja, we notice that the boats are moving much in the marina. The swell comes along the seawall and raises and lowers the water level in the harbor. Far away at sea, the swell is 4 m high! But the wind seems to start turning eastward, that's good news.



Jens looks at the waves

Sunday, October 19, 2014. Sesimbra

The weather forecast confirms it, the wind is turning first east and then north, the swell will subside and it will last a week so everyone decides to leave, we also. And in addition the sun is out and it's very nice weather. The first ones are Jacob and Vicky on their "Conquistador" at 9:30 am. We wish them a good crossing to Madeira, 4 or 5 days at sea.



"Conquistador" leaves first

And then it's us, in fact we thought of leaving at noon but we are ready sooner, then we go at 11 am. And after us the "Miss" of the other Danes, I think. After the swell of the past days and the east wind which is quite strong, we do not know exactly what is waiting for us on the sea. But good surprise, the swell is 2-2.5 m but very long, at least 50 m between each wave and the wind is preventing us from rolling. We have mainsail and jib and the wind stabilizes us well. It's very beautiful, warmer as the day goes by, and this crossing is very pleasant. I forgot to say that we are sailing to Sesimbra, a port 25 miles south. In the afternoon, the swell becomes much smaller and the wind goes down too, it becomes very calm, with a splendid sunshine. And, we have the great joy to admire gannets, these magnificent birds bearing "make up" on their face. We circle "Cabo Espichel", motor along its south side and go eastward to Sesimbra.



Cabo Espichel

20 minutes before the harbor, on the open sea, I am surprised to see dragonflies, first a few ones and more and more. Dragonflies on the sea?



A dragonfly

We arrive at the Sesimbra marina at 4 pm, and get a friendly welcome from the lady at the reception. A man from the marina explains us that the dragonflies fly from Morocco and here, on land, there are hundreds (thousands?) that fly north. The weather is beautiful and hot, 29 °, right temperature to go swimming. Jens takes out the bikes, the beach is at about 2 km from the marina. Good first impression of Sesimbra, beautiful beach and nice promenade, and many people are on the beach, it's Sunday. After swimming (water at 20 °), we hear music on the promenade: this is a demo of acrobatic dance by a troupe of youngsters. And they are good!



Acrobatic dance. Sesimbra



Good night. Sesimbra

Oeiras-Sesimbra : 23 nm (41 km)

Florvåg-Sesimbra : $1\ 651 + 23 = 1\ 674$ nm (3 013 km)

Monday, October 20, 2014

I forgot to say something yesterday: shortly before leaving Oeiras, I pass by three men who are preparing a sailboat and speak English among themselves, an English speaking man and two Portuguese. So I ask them if they go south, like us. David, the English speaking one, says no, they are just going out for a few hours in the bay. We talk a little about the weather, they did not look at the weather forecast but ask a leader in the sailing club what he thinks. He categorically says that the swell is 5-6 m at sea! Fortunately, I know that, yes there is a heavy swell, but far out in the sea. It is enough to demoralize the troops! David and his friends then come and see (and admire) Maja. They go out to sea and we make big arms signals to say goodbye.

Returning to today, Monday. Great weather, we slept with the window of our "room" wide open, from our bed we see a beautiful starry sky. 26 ° last night at 10 pm and 24 ° this morning at 8 am. We leave early to walk before it is too hot. We walk up to a campsite just behind the marina, hoping to find a more direct route to the city, but there is none. The camping manager, very friendly, gives us a map and shows us even on his computer, on Google map, the path up to the castle. We ride to Sesimbra, let the bike "tied" to an utility pole and climb on foot. The path by chance is in the shade, because it is quite steep, the castle is at an altitude of 240 meters. This castle was built in 1200 or so and had a long wall protecting the village up there.



The fishing harbor



The castle

They had a beautiful view of the sea, especially to see the pirates coming. A map shows the dates of the “reconquista” of Portugal, from 1000 until 1249, almost 250 years. We take a drink, we had walked two hours, and then we go down, retrieve the bikes and go for a swim.



The plan was to eat lunch on the boat, but the restaurants tempt us with beautiful fresh fish. We lunch at Casa Felipe, the fish is excellent. It's funny: on our left, a large family speaks French but is of Portuguese origin and to our right, a young couple with two children also speak French but the young woman speaks Portuguese with the waiter. We go back to the boat to work, swim out again in late afternoon and go shopping. We dine late, it's still warm. After dinner, I suggest a walk on the pier; I did not know it was so long, it is at least 1 km long. It is illuminated and many people are walking on it. Here also, wild cats, quite fat, live there. I think the fishermen feed them. We say hello and chat a bit with a French crew on a big yacht, a family with two daughters and a big dog.

Tuesday, October 21, 2014. Sesimbra

We start early, at 9:15 am. We go to Cape Lighthouse Espichel by bike, by a shortcut. The road starts from the east side of the city, so for us in the west part that makes a big detour. But this shortcut is very steep, we cycle a few hundred meters and then push our bikes. The sun is hot, the landscape is dry and it makes me think of the crossing of the desert by Tintin and Captain Haddock. I almost expect to see mirages.



It's steep and the road is not very good



Housing to pilgrims

We're not going fast and stop often. Finally we arrive on the plateau and find the road. What a luxury to ride on asphalt, plus it is almost flat. The landscape is green now and we pass through several villages. We finally arrive at the end of the road, at Cabo Espichel. The lighthouse is closed to the public. But nearby, you can walk among towering buildings, remnants of the proposed housing to pilgrims in the eighteenth century. The Virgin is supposed to have appeared here and it became a popular place of pilgrimage. We take a drink, eat a cake and leave again. The return is a piece of cake, we remain on the road all the way into town, but the last kilometers are just downhill. We did 35 km in all. We go for a swim to refresh ourselves and return to the boat for lunch, it is 2 pm. We had our ration of sunshine, fresh air and exercise for the day. We remain on Maja in the afternoon and then back to the beach. Jens goes shopping and I go back to the marina. As I let out people at the gate, the man said, "Hello, do you remember me?" I recognize him but I do not know from where. He adds: "Bayona, with Fritz and Uwe." That's right; he is a German who came to drink coffee on Maja with Fritz and Uwe. They stayed long in Cascais, also waiting for better weather. The weather forecast is good for several days, that's why we stay here one more day, we think of leaving on Thursday.



The sea

Wednesday, October 22, 2014. Sesimbra

No big expeditions today, neither by bike or on foot. We go for a walk around town, buy postcards and stamps at the post office. We follow the signs "Correios" (postoffice) and then walk up and go down, in fact we make a long detour. These signs are for cars, and as all the narrow streets are one-way, the distance is much longer. We go to the beach, lunch "at home", work on the boat and back to the beach. This is where I do my BA (bonne action, good deed): I see an English family with two children who are at the point where the sea is breaking, the children can't go swimming. So I approached them and indicates to them the other end of the beach, closer to the harbor, where the sea is much calmer. They thank me and move there.



The beach. Sesimbra

When we return to the marina, a French boat has just arrived, it's Fitou (Francis and Yolande, I think) that we had seen in Moaña in August! Nice dinner, to end our stay in Sesimbra at the Café Filipe (not Casa Felipe) where we enjoy a good fish, "robalo" (sea bass). We leave tomorrow for Sines, further south. We will remember Sesimbra with pleasure, nice town, beautiful beach and great weather.



Sesimbra is an active fishing harbor

Thursday, October 23, 2014. Sines

Jens goes to buy bread, I take a shower and Jens pays the marina. We want to say hello to Francis and Yolande ... but they are already gone. We leave, at 9:50 am, with a light breeze from the east. We try to sail only but it goes really slowly so we combine sail and motor. I put a picture of our destination on the map, in a straight line from Sesimbra to Sines, 30 NM (54 km). Beautiful crossing our worry right now is the flies! We have some from the start and they come more and more. I understand that they are happy to make a stop in Maja, but we

don't agree. Armed with the "Diario de Notícias" (a Portuguese newspaper), we conduct a valiant battle.



Jens, armed with a newspaper, is ready to attack

We see dolphins and apparently a special kind of dolphins lives in this estuary. At Sesimbra marina, a leaflet in Portuguese and English explained what to do and not to do when dolphin watching: do not get too close etc ... but it's not our problem, it is the dolphins who are watching us.



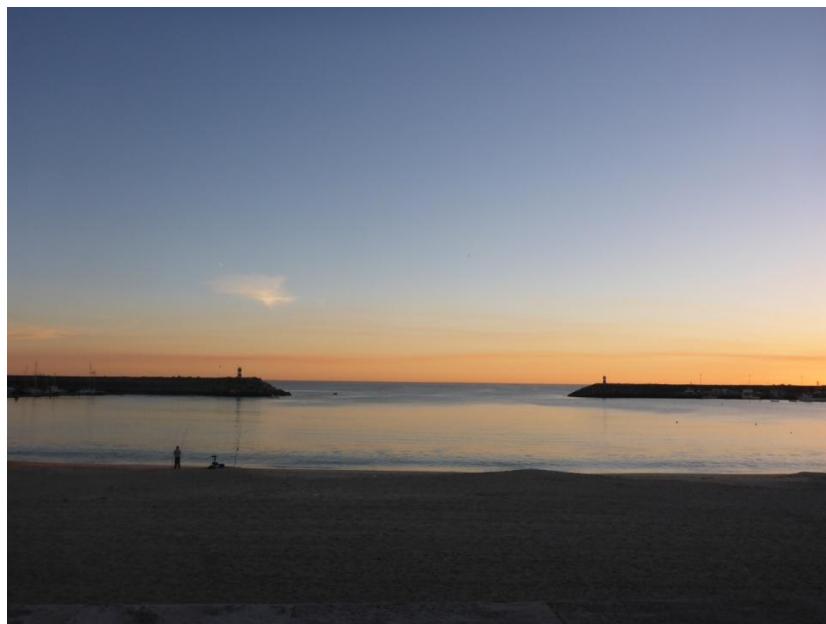
Maja

We lower the sail, the wind dropped further. We see gannets and I wonder where these big, beautiful birds have their nests. Jens called me at one point, he saw a large animal in the water. It's bigger and more massive than a dolphin and very light in color. I take pictures, but

it is not easy to see what it is. We arrive at Sines at 5 pm. Sines is a major harbor and nine ships line up to enter the port. Two systems of dikes protect the harbor and the marina is well inside. A guy is waiting for us on the pontoon and shows us a place, but in fact the marina is half empty. We are the only boat on a long pontoon. A Spanish guys comes to say hello and speaks well of Maja. He jokes with the name: Maja in Spanish means pretty. And who do we see anchored at the marina entrance: Fitou with Francis and Yolande. We go swimming and walk a little in the old town. Sines is the first city where we do not see hotels, restaurants and block of holidays apartments. The old town and its small beach remain authentic, at least what we see.



Sines



Sunset

Sesimbra-Sines : 31 nm (56 km)

Florvåg-Sines : $1\ 674 + 31 = 1\ 705$ nm (3 069 km)

Friday, October 24, 2014. Sines



Vasco de Gama was born here

When we wake Fitou is already gone and also the Spanish guy. We remain one more day in Sines, Jens cleans the propeller with a brush tied to the long hook and changes the oil in the engine while I write the blog and then we ride westward, towards the east coast which is quite wild. On returning we go shopping at Lidl, then lunch on the boat. Several boats arrive in the afternoon, a Belgian one with a family of three fairly young children, a French one, a big beautiful Norwegian wooden sailboat which anchors and a French motor-sailor with an old crew. The man comes to ask me if I speak French and at my affirmative answer, starts chatting with me. He is 81 years old and his wife almost as much. The boat is called Miss Froggy because his wife, when she was young spent much time in the water and an Australian friend had called her Miss Froggy. Jacques, it is his name, is still working: he is captain on a super-yacht of 110 feet (33 m) in the United States with four professional sailors under his command. The owner of this yacht pays his trip from France to the United States, when he wants to take a cruise. Interesting guy, but very talkative.



Good dinner

We dine out in a small coffee. We eat like kings, salad, fresh fish plus a little squid to taste it, vegetables, dessert, beer, coffee and liqueur for € 32 for two. Tomorrow we leave early. The weather is good and we have a long leg to make (74 NM or 133 km, minimum 14 hours), or alternatively, anchoring halfway in an open bay. We'll see.

Saturday, October 25, 2014. Arrifana

We start at 7:15 am, it is not yet daylight, but it will not be long. We pass ships waiting to enter the harbor and see the sunrise.



Ships waiting to enter Sines harbor

We breakfast on the way, the sea is calm, just a little swell. The wind is southeast, Force 2-3, not enough for us, so we sail and motor. The swell is about 1m but sometimes a higher wave is passing. We sail along the coast near enough, the area is wild, large sand dunes, cliffs, the sea breacking and nobody. We pass Cabo (Cape) Sardão and I take a photo of the lighthouse up there.



Cabo Sardão

At one point, when we are looking both of us, we see a lobster pot but we miss another one! Jens makes a noise and I think that he saw dolphins, but this is not that, it is a pot passing 20 cm from the boat! We can go to Lagos, our destination, but it means that we will pass the Cabo Sao Vicente, the south-west corner of Portugal at night. We want to see it. So we put the way-point at the Bay of Arrifana, recommended in the guide as safe in case of wind from the north or east, but not recommended in heavy swell "When surfers arrive, it is time to sail away". We are there at 3:30 pm, it is fine, the sea is calm but there is always swell, not too big but enough to makes Maja roll. We anchore in 8 m of water.



The village and the tiny harbor



Our tender



The harbor and the road

The beach looks pretty close with the swell rolling but actually it is far away, but the sound of the sea breaking is heard clearly. A motorboat comes to see us, they are English. When they go ashore in the tiny port, they pull their boat up the road with their car, a powerful 4x4: we can see the road is very steep. We put the tender in the water and Jens rows to the small harbor which is really tiny. Here we come on the ramp which is very steep and slippery at the

bottom but that some young kayak people help us. We pull the tender well on the ramp and leave it here. It is so steep that the road up from the port is cut into the side of the cliff and only deserves the port. There is another road that serves the village, a little further south but we can not pass from the port to the village at sea level, one must go up and go down. And it is high and steep. We climb up the road from the harbor and up there the view is really beautiful. We go down to our tender and talk with a resident here, in a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish. He lived a time in the Algarve, the warmer and softer southern region of Portugal, but he prefers the west coast, it is wilder. He tells us that when the sea is rough, they have a tractor that trails the boats up the road. He also talks about a Russian guy who came all the way from Russia on ... a windsurf! We leave to Maja, I write the blog, it's rolling but it's just Ok, Jens makes dinner and we dine outside at the sound of the sea breaking on the beach. Maja rolls but not too much. And this time, having learned from our experience at Berlenga Island, we take the tender on Maja.



Arrifana. Maja is the dot on the right



Maja anchored. Arrifana



Arrifana by night

Sines-Arrifana: 36 nm (65 km)

Florvåg-Arrifana: $1\ 705 + 36 = 1\ 741$ nm (3 134 km)

Sunday, October 26, 2014. Lagos

We slept pretty well, but Maja rolled quite a lot. I woke up once and the door of the doghouse which is a sliding door was open. We note immediately that the waves breaking on the beach are bigger. Jens washes himself and shortly after we see both a much larger wave than the others coming from the south-west, it lifts Maja up, no problem, but when it goes breaking on the beach, it is impressive and we have the impression that it started rolling pretty close to us. And another big one comes soon after, that's fine as I have time to take a picture but we decide quickly to leave.



The big wave. It's time to leave and quickly



Bye, bye Arrifana

I put on my clothes in two minutes, Jens starts the engine and I drive slowly forwards while he pulls up the anchor. I'm a little nervous, if another big wave arrives during the maneuver, it would not be funny. But everything goes well, no big waves. We leave the bay enjoying the beautiful landscape just as the sun rises. At the end of the bay, a rock has a curious shape, from a distance it looks like a Christmas tree. We breakfast under way and continue south. We approach Cabo São Vicente, the south-west corner of Portugal. The sea is fairly calm but always with a long swell, perhaps 1.5 m in height. It does feel much when navigating but we see it when it breaks on the coast or on the rocks.



Cabo São Vicente, south-west corner of portugal

We pass the Cabo São Vicente and the landscape changes immediately, the cliffs are now honey-colored, the swell subsides gradually and we see large caves under the cliff. After Cabo São Vicente, we find the Ponta de Sagres and Ponta da Piedade and finally arrive in Lagos. After the first cape, the wind is from the front, the small waves too and I do not know if there

is current but our progress is slow. We motor almost three hours to make 11 NM (20 km). But it is nice and we are very pleased to have passed this important milestone of the trip. Until now it was always going south but from today we go east. After the “corner” we see again many gannets, I put a picture of them.



Gannets (picture taken from a book)



After Cabo Sao Vicente, we see many caves



Arrival in Lagos



Lagos Marina

Lagos Marina, very important and frequented by many foreigners is a little off the coast, on a large river. We moor to a waiting pontoon, we register at the office, the keeper of the marina opens a gateway and we go into the marina. Waiting at the dock, we're behind a sailboat called "La Maja". We take our place, the marina is almost full, put the bike on the ground and ride for a swim on a large beach 5 minutes by bike from the marina, the water is 22 °. A couple on a yacht is waving to us when we go cycling, it is Francis and Yolande on Fitou, we are going to see them tomorrow. Diner on the boat and to bed.

Arrifana-Lagos : 31 nm (56 km)

Florvåg-Lagos : $1\ 741 + 31 = 1\ 772$ nm (3 189 km)

Monday, October 27, 2014. Lagos

Quiet night, it's amazing! This is the first night for a long time where we do not hear the noise of the moving boats, ropes creaking and squeaking defenses. In fact since Ares, our first port in northern Spain, the boats are always moving in marinas because of the swell. They go up, down, forward or backward, not much if it's quiet, more if it is windy, but they are moving. Now it's over. We wash the laundry, put it to dry all around on Maja, stay a little on the boat and receive the visit of Francis and Yolande.



They are both good fishermen and give many advices to Jens. We spend a good time together, they leave and we go for a bike tour to the Punta de Piedade. We follow the road that goes to the end. Small boats take tourists to visit the caves. It's nice and quiet, but one of the guys told us that as soon as there has waves they can't go. We return to Lagos, and half-way descend a staircase of wood and go for a swim at the Praia do Camilo.



Praia do Camilo



Punta de Piedade



There are actually two beaches which are connected by a tunnel dug under the mountain. A cute black and white cat is on the beach, alone. I think (and hope) he went down the stairs and that he comes from a top restaurant. We go back, eat lunch very late and Jens takes a nap, and then we both work. We walk to the town, it's nice to be so close to the city, just go over the bridge and we are it is the center of Lagos. There is a lot of tourists, even now in late October, we hear a lot of English spoken. Dozens of restaurants line the pedestrian streets, there must be crowds in summer. We walk aimlessly; we go a little and find a nice little cafe. We take only one dish, a beer and a coffee and it's very cheap. On returning we hear laughter and applause, so we come closer and a guy is giving a balancing show on a one wheel bike. He is good and also very funny. He speaks a mixture of Portuguese, English, Spanish and French, request assistance from the public and calls his aides by the name of their country: "Germany, take my hand. Spain, push me up." We laugh and he deserves well a few euros.



He is good and funny

Tuesday, October 28, 2014. Lagos

It is gray and the wind is blowing. We stay on the boat in the morning, Jens goes to the tourist office for a map and ask if it is possible to ride along the river, but no, it is not possible. In the early afternoon, we ride along the sea to the east. A brand new road runs parallel to the sea, but stops short after 2-3 km. The landscape is not very pretty, the sea and the beach are beautiful, but the rest are huge hotels and huge apartments blocks separated from the beach by a moor and the railway. We made a U-turn and come back.



The road going nowhere

A village is between the hotels and the sea. We go there, but it's pretty miserable, dirt roads, smashed, the trash everywhere and in addition a large dog barking after me aggressively. I'm scared and I shout at him: "Gå hjem" ! (Go home, in Norwegian!) and a man recalls him. It is perhaps a hippy village, for the surfers. Not a very pleasant ride. To recover, I cook a good ratatouille for dinner.

Wednesday, October 29, 2014. Lagos

Yolande and Francis invite us to drink a cup of tea in the morning on their "Fitou". Francis shows his fishing lines to Jens and Yolande gives us a pot of homemade fish rillettes, thank you to them. Then I am going to walk into town, but begin to look at the boats along the pontoons. I talk with Christophe, a French guy that Francis and Yolande have already met several times. He tells me that since he applies Francis' advices to fish, they (he and his wife Celine) catch lots of fish. I continue, it's really international: we see boats carrying American, English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Irish and even the Isle of Man (Irish Sea) flags. I also speak with a couple of Norwegians, Marit and Trond, from Molde, a little north of Bergen. Finally, I return to the boat, it's time for lunch, no walking into town this morning. After lunch we cycle to a beach after Ponta de Piedade, Praia (beach) de Mos, the wind blows well and waves are a little big for my taste, but clinging to Jens, that's fine. Then Jens plays alone in the waves. Back to the boat and a dinner of a pizza in town.

Thursday, October 30, 2014. Lagos

I'm wandering alone in the city, I want to see the old Slave Market, but it is closed for restoration. I buy a book on Algarve wildflowers and walk along the river. The entrance to the port does not look nice today with big waves rolling in. I think that no boat will arrive with this wind. Error: a yacht is entering the harbor, I see it when I'm on the bridge and take a picture. The man on the wheel wants to come to the pontoon but does not do it well, tries several times but slows down too early and is pushed away from the pontoon by the wind. A young girl is ready to jump but can't, the boat is still too far from the pontoon. And no one is

there to help them. Listening only to my courage, I go down to the pontoon and grab the rope that the girl throws at me and try to tie it to a bollard, but the wind is pushing the boat away.



The yacht coming in which I helped

The guy at the wheel is yelling at me to pull harder! Me, Jeannette, how can I pull a boat of 10 tons! I tell him that it is very hard and if he does not stop yelling at me, I drop everything! I want to help and he yells at me! I manage to tie a rope in the middle, I get one from the front, tie it, and also a rope behind. The girl jumps on land and thanked me profusely, but the two (old) fellows don't say a word. I ask the girl (who is Swiss) how was the harbor entrance. She replies: "Terrible, it was terrible!" And the poor girl is still shaking. But the captain mumbles "No problem." I let them, still smiling at the comic of the situation: me, a grandmother, was the only one who went to help them and the captain grumbles and wants me to pull harder! Lunch on boat and bike ride to another beach further east, Praia da Luz. Same scenario than yesterday, big waves, Jens holding my hand first and going again alone in the waves. Back to Maja and I see a young woman I think I recognize her but from where? Then I get it: it is the young woman who spoke to us in the metro from Porto to Povoa de Varzim, we walked together between the subway station and the marina. We go to their boat to visit them, her, her husband and their 4 year old son. They are Germans, took a year free to navigate and are very nice.

Friday, October 31, 2014. Lagos

Today we visit by bus, Carlos' father. Carlos is a friend of Thorsten and Laila (and he even worked as a substitute in my little kindergarten!) whose father lives in Portugal. Laila gave me a phone number and Jens contacted him and he awaits us. We take the bus at the bus station just opposite the marina, at 8: 45 am to Aljezur, a small town about thirty km from here. We pass through oak cork forests, where the trees are "peeled" from their bark and quiet villages. Markus (Carlos' father), is expecting us at the bus stop in Aljezur. We have coffee together and got into his old 4x4, a kind of jeep. He lives a few km from Aljezur. He was part of a group of young Germans who, in the eighties, had established a kind of community here in Portugal. They had bought a large abandoned estate and settled there. They renovated the old houses and even built new ones. There was no problem with water, a river and wells gave more than necessary, but there was no electricity. Children were born and raised here. Markus and his partner sent Carlos to the village school, and he learned Portuguese and seen the "other world." Now young people are gone but at least one new young couple is living here with their three children, they live in yurts, a kind of round tent from Mongolia. Markus and us talk well together, he is interested in boat and we are interested in this community life.



A yurt. Markus

His house is very well located, with a beautiful view of a mountain and, luckily, even in winter the sun passes just above the mountain. The area is huge and we walk to see the yurts, another house where a man is changing a Caravelle's engine (Jens knows that!) And we are going to visit his sister Pia who lives on the other side of the river. Her companion, Walter, is French and a cook, and proposes to make a couscous, one of my favorite's dishes. We have lunch the five of us outside, it is sunny and the vegetarian couscous is excellent.



Lunch together

Markus takes us then to visit another house where a man has bees and sells honey and we buy a jar of honey. Time passes and soon it's time to take the bus, Markus drives us to Aljezur. Thank you to him and his companions to this good day in an environment so different from marinas. We hope he can come and see us at the boat, as we are in the Algarve for quite a time.

Saturday, November 1st, 2014. Alvor



We motor out of the river. Lagos

The weather is good for at least two days and a lots of boats are leaving, Francis and Yolande, Christophe and Celine and the Belgian couple with four children leave, they all go together to Portimão, a port a little further east. We will also leave but only to Alvor, a village on the edge of a kind of lagoon and where we must anchor. The weather is so quiet that it's now or never to go there. Jens goes shopping while I write yesterday's blog, we go swimming, lunch and we read the paper (a Portuguese one, with a little difficulty and a Spanish one to follow the stories of corruption!). We leave at 3 pm to get there at 3:30 pm when the tide begins to rise. It is a very short distance, 2 MN (3.6 km). All goes well, the sea is calm, the sky is blue ... no problem to go between the two piers. This lagoon is full of sandbanks and one must follow a channel. Two buoys mark it, a green should be left to the right and a little further a red should be left to the left. In principle, we should follow a straight line between the two buoys. But sandbars move. Already at the first mark, Jens has a doubt, the closer we get to the buoy the more depth decreases. He thus passes from the other side. We are heading towards the second buoy when, boom, we run into a sandbank! Jens tries to put the engine forward, backward, nothing to do, Maja does not move. We are really stuck! I do not like it, but Jens reassures me: there is no danger, it is very quiet and the tide rises, it is just to wait. The depth sounder marks 60 cm! But we must add 60 cm, so it is 1.2 m, but Maja has a draft of 1.4 m, so, no doubt, there is a problem. So we wait. And when we feel that we are floating, Jens tries again to move, but no. In fact, we go further into the sand. We put the tender onto the water and Jens will probe the area. He realizes that it is shallow in front of us, we must go to the right. He then has the idea to rotate the boat, first by pulling her with the tender, but this project is abandoned very quickly. We have a bow thruster that can rotate the boat more effectively. And it works, Maja pivots and is free



60 cm + 60 cm = 1 m 20
Maja needs 1 m 40 !



Jens probes the depth



He tries to pull Maja. It doesn't work

We are standing there at least one hour. In fact, the sand is not at all at the same place in reality and on the map. A fisherman who passes by signals us to go much more to the right. The rest of the channel presents no problem, we reach Alvor just before dark; it took us almost three hours to come. By the way, alvor means “serious” in Norwegian. We anchor and the anchor holds. The ankerdram (small glass of arrival) feels good after all these emotions.



Alvor

Lagos-Alvor : 5 nm (9 km)

Florvåg-Alvor : $1\ 772 + 5 = 1\ 777$ nm (3 198 km)

Sunday, November 2, 2014. Alvor



Maja anchored. Alvor

We slept very well, the night was quiet and dark, in the marinas there is always many lights. A guy who is anchored here comes to say hello, he is Dutch. He lives here, and he tells us that he pays 100 euros a year to have his boat anchored in the bay. Morning stroll in the "village", or what was a village before but is now colonized by the English. Everything is written in English, the names of the bars and restaurants are English. The center is still Portuguese but around they are only big buildings and hotels. But at this season it's pretty quiet. We go to the market and then to the beach.



Family lunch on the beach

Back on Maja, lunch, journal, blog then rowing once again in town for a little walk and we come back at nightfall.



Maja. Alvor

Monday, November 3, 2014. Vilamoura

The weather forecast is good for today, but tomorrow it's going to rain and blow hard, so we start at 9: 20 am to Vilamoura, a large marina at 25 MN (45 km) to the east. Before leaving, I see a man who is looking for shells on a sand bank, and walking in the water when the sand is covered by the tide. We must pass the channel again with the sand banks, but the tide is higher and we know from experience where we must not go. All goes well and we let the green buoy well to the right (when we should leave it to the left). We go out to sea, the sea is calm and the wind rises from the southwest, in fact we have it almost from behind. We go first with the engine, then motor and sail and sail only when the wind is strong enough. We follow the disfigured Algarve coast. If there is a beach, there are many buildings and hotels, the only places still are cliff top without beach. The ocher cliffs are pierced by numerous caves. Resorts after resorts are passed: Portimão, Albufeira and at least Vilamoura.



Portimao



A fishing boat, putting lobster pots into the sea



Harbor entrance. Vilamoura



Vilamoura marina

We enter the harbor at 3 pm, with a fair wind and, luckily, it becomes much stronger after our arrival, accompanied by rain. The marina is huge (1,000 berths), the largest in Portugal and Vilamoura is a complex of holidays homes and hotels created from scratch, started in the sixties, a kind of La Grande Motte in France. The "town" is centered on the marina and hotels, apartments, restaurants, bars, shops are around. Vilamoura also has five golf courses with luxury villas for golfers. Strange town, but almost empty a rainy Monday in November. In summer, when everything is full, it must be something else. The girl at the reception tells us our place is number 41 on the pontoon M. A guy in Zodiac shows us the way, and we tie Maja in her place. It just stopped raining and we go on reconnaissance, along with a British couple with two young daughters. They tell us where the supermarket is. We walk a little on the dock, deserts restaurants, empty bars, it's not much fun. We find the supermarket and do our shopping. We come back and want to open the door of the dock with our key, but it does not work. And for good reason. We see Maja at the N pontoon and our key opens only the pontoon M gate. The guy in zodiac who showed us our place took us to the N pontoon by mistake. We are at berth 41 but on the wrong pontoon. Fortunately a phone number on the gate saves us. Jens phones, the girl at the reception opens the gate for us and we move Maja. Now we are at berth 41 at the M pontoon.



Hotel Tivoli *****

Alvor-Vilamoura : 23 nm (41 km)

Florvåg-Vilamoura : $1\ 777 + 23 = 1\ 800$ nm (3 240 km)

Tuesday, November 4, 2014. Vilamoura

Still windy and an alternation of sun and clouds. It's getting cooler at night, 14 ° tonight. We walk to the reception and we thought it would be a short walk of 10 minutes, but no, we must go almost all around the marina and it takes us half an hour. We ask the girl for a map of the city and its surroundings. At 2-3 km of Vilamoura, a fishing village is old. On our "Cruising Guide", a plan explains the two entrances, one for the marina and the other one for the fishing harbor. And the guy says that every year, yachtsmen get it wrong and enter the fishing harbor. We decide to go there after lunch. Vilamoura plans are hardly made for cyclists, and we turn and turn but finally we find Quarteira, the "village" which also has become touristy. But here

at least, there is a town center and the beautiful promenade is along the sea. It is much more pleasant to walk along the sea than around a marina.



Quarteira

And it is not as chic, Vilamoura hotels are 4 or 5 stars. It is also livelier. We thought of going for a swim but there is a lot of wind and when the sun hides, it is not so warm so we don't. We have coffee and then we go shopping at a "Chinese", they are shops where you can find everything and cheap. We buy an umbrella, two stools for when we have guests on the boat, Jens needs paint and I clothespins. And I buy luxury pins: some were 1 euro for 24 and I take them to one euro fifty!



Jens with our purchases

We return to the boat and we have a quiet evening with a stroll after dinner. All cafes retransmit a football match, otherwise there is little life in the streets and most of the buildings are dark.

Wednesday, November 5, 2014. Vilamoura



The laundry is drying

Sun and wind, it's time to do laundry, in fact we do two washing machines, we wash all our clothes. At 11: 30 am, it's finish and I'm having fun to hang everything to dry everywhere on Maja. Then we go on bike this time to the west. The builder of Vilamoura left a large area of marshland without building. We go there; we get lost a little, pass a primitive bridge, are going too far to the west and ride back the sea at a small resort, Falesia.



A primitive bridge



The beach

The beach is beautiful and wood panels are available to users to make shelters from the wind. Very short swimming for me, the waves are high. We're back in the village at Falesia and eat a good lunch for 18 euros for both of us, then we return to Vilamoura along the sea. In the marina, super motor yachts (empty) are in the majority, and then some sailboats (also empty) and finally, us living on board a few sailboats. But almost no boat have their nationality flag and courtesy flag, so no one knows who is Portuguese, and who is foreigner and where do they come from. It's dead and not very social. Last anecdote: a motorboat is called "No problem" and the joke is that he has a problem and calls for help. The rescuer asks his name and the guy answers "No problem" so the rescuer hangs up the phone!



No problem

Thursday, November 6, 2014. Culatra Island

We start at 9:45 am, take diesel at the marina and go out to sea. The weather is calm and the sun is shining. We motor along the coast towards the east, near enough to see it, it is very touristy but at one place buildings stop and nature begins.



Buildings on the left, nature on the right

We are motoring, there is virtually no wind. Our next stop is at a lagoon where we will anchor near Faro and Olhão. We approach the lagoon's entrance, well defined with a green and a red mark when we see another yacht that's going in, almost at the same time as us: it is Francis and Yolande's "Fitou". The sea rises and the water enters the lagoon, so a strong current is pushing us, it boils and swirls but it is very short and it gives us a good speed, 9 knots. In the lagoon, Fitou is turning left to Olhão and us to the right to the Ilha de Culatra. This lagoon is full of sandbanks but is deeper and well marked.



The laguna entrance

We arrive without problem in front of Culatra Island. Nine boats are already anchored, but it is very large and there is space. We anchor, it is 1:30 pm and we go to work: our “Cruising guide” is clear, here the maritime police is strict and all the boats which anchor must have a black ball (day) and a light on top of the mast (night). We have to make a black ball, but with what? Jens and I have the same idea: with cardboard from our 3 l wine container. No sooner said than done and in 5 minutes we have our black “ball”, then we have lunch.



Our black “ball”

The wind picks up and when Jens proposes to go for a coffee on the island with the tender, I'm not enthusiastic, the waves are a bit high and the tender is very small. We take coffee on Maja and later, the waves being smaller, we go ashore. This island is very special; it is a kind of sandbank a little higher than the others. It is all sand but a village was installed there because of the fishing. A recent harbor shelters the small fishing boats but it is too small and many boats are drawn on the beach. A ferry connects the island to Olhão and in summer, it is

very touristy, but now it's quiet. A bay dries behind the village and serves as a "port" to many English yachts throughout the year. We walk in the village, Culatra, the streets are sandy. Most have a path of cement a meter wide or so. I forgot to say that there are no cars here, only a few tractors, and despite the sand, it is very flowery. The village seems active, many children are playing outside, the café is full, the harbor is busy and a beautiful little school looks new. Until 1987, there was neither public water or electricity on the island. We return to Maja almost at nightfall and Jens makes a pizza while I'm doing the blog.

Vilamoura-Culatra : 36 nm (65 km)

Florvåg-Culatra : 1 800 + 36 = 1 836 nm (3 305 km)

Friday, November 7, 2014. Culatra Island



The village. Culatra

We see further on a sandbar, a sailboat that ran aground and apparently the owner is not here. After breakfast we decide to go and visit another Norwegian sailboat, it's about 300 meters from us and it is with the wind (light) and with the current, the tide is rising and water enters the bay. Jens is rowing and we knock on the hull of the beautiful Norwegian sailboat.



“Dvina”, the Norwegian yacht

The couple from Oslo invites us on board and offer us coffee. They left Norway on June 14 (we did in June 24) and started crossing the North Sea from Espevaer like us. Their boat appears to be at least 100 years but is only 15 years old. It is big (over 40 feet) and inside it is like a house, it's high, bright, with several rooms and they even have a wood stove. They have already gone to the Caribbean but this time will "only" sail down to Cape Verde. We spend a great time together and don't notice that the wind forced. When it's time to leave, it blows a strong wind and the waves are big for our small tender. Jens wants to go but I'm not enthusiastic. They then propose a solution: we try and if that does not work, we go back to them and they will drive us to Maja with their tender that is larger and has an outboard motor. So we go against the wind and against the waves.



Rowing home, against wind and waves

Jens chooses to "tack" not to go against all that but to go diagonally to one side and then "turn" and go diagonally in the other. We are moving very slowly and are soaked by the spray. When a higher wave hits us I have to bail out and it reminds me of what an old man told us on an island north when we went to the Lofoten. He and his brother were going to school on another island, one (10 years) was rowing and the other one (8 years) was bailing out. We progress and finally, we reach Maja, it took us about 25-30 minutes. We must change completely, fortunately it is not cold. We are happy and actually it was not that bad. A good lunch gives us our strength back, and just after the wind dies down, so we leave with the tender to the island. We want to see the lighthouse Santa Maria to the west of the island. We ask the way and we are told to follow a tractor track.



Culatra's motorway

We start with firm steps, and it is not easy to have firm steps in the sand, and after 5 minutes are stopped by a "river". In fact it is salt water, a sort of fjord that goes into the land. We can pass at low tide but not now. We turn around and we go to the beach that we follow to the west. The lighthouse and the other village are three miles away, we walk well, and it's actually easier on wet sand than on the tractor track. We bathe quickly, the water is 17 °. The village is called Farol, which means lighthouse and deserted, it is inhabited only in summer. We come back by the same route, do our shopping at the supermarket in Culatra and return to the boat. A 10:30 pm, our eyes are closing, these active holidays are really tiring.

Saturday, November 8, 2014. Culatra

Nice quiet time, so we row to see the yacht beached on the sand, it is about one km from Maja. Jens is rowing and going past Divna we invite Anne and Erik for lunch. The anchor of this sailboat didn't hold and the wind and the waves pushed him up on a sandbar.



The stranded yacht

Some ladies gather shellfish and Jens asked them when it happened (in Spanish). They answer that there are 5 or 6 days, surely the night there was a lot of wind in the evening we arrived in Vilamoura, the classy marina. Anne and Erik and the crew of a British sailboat, "Martha Primrose" come to see the poor stranded yacht. We do not stay long because the wind picks up and we do not want to row against wind and waves like yesterday. But in fact the wind is not too strong and it is I who row for the return to the harbor, one km. We go shopping and buy cakes at the pastry in the village. At one o'clock, Anne and Erik arrive for lunch.



Anne and Erik arrive for lunch

Erik has his portable radio with him; he awaits news from Ashley, the English guy on Martha Primrose: he is trying to find the owner of the stranded boat. Good lunch and great dessert, Anne and Erik also bought cakes in the pastry! Ashley calls, he managed to contact the owner who is in England and it is agreed that Ashley and Erik can try to pull his boat to the water. Anne and Erik therefore leave at 3 pm; high tide is at 3:33 pm, so they call it “the 333 rescue operation”. We follow the rescue with binoculars, a good wind is blowing and it's too far for us to go in the tender. A Dutch crew and another English one join the operation. They are trying first to pull her but the keel is too deep in the sand. They try to tilt her by pulling on the mast and then setting sail, but to no avail, it just rotates a little. Martha Primrose is the only major boat nearby and is responsible for the towing but she has also a draft of 2 m and can't stay too long. The tide begins to fall, and after an hour of effort, they have to give up and everyone leaves. On Maja Jens starts to work: he saws a hole between the living room and the engine room behind the stairs in order to access a remote corner of the engine. I write the blog. Night falls, the wind becomes stronger and he begins to rain cats and dogs accompanied by strong gusts. I don't like it, let's hope the anchor hold! Jens has added 10 m of chain this afternoon and that's good. This is impressive, it's dark as pitch, the wind is roaring and it is raining very hard. Fortunately it only lasts 10-15 minutes, and it becomes calm then it starts again a second time. I check every couple of minutes that we don't drift taking mark on the red and green marks at the harbor entrance, we are just in front of it. Jens look at the anemometer and it shows 14 meters / second (a good force 6, almost 7!). But the anchor holds well. Then the wind calms down and everything returns to normal even with a beautiful moonlight but it's cool and Jens lit the stove. We have dinner of salad and cheese and finish the cakes, a good book, a cup of tea and in bed.



Ilha da Culatra (picture from the guide)

Sunday, November 9, 2014. Culatra Island

Good weather today also, we take a long breakfast in the sun on Maja. At around 11 am, we row (or better said Jens rows) to land and we walk on the beach, this time to the east. The beach is beautiful and deserted. We go and see the boats stranded voluntarily, most are not occupied. The owners choose this system as they do not pay marina fees. We walk about three kilometers, and the island is about 6-7 km long. Culatra is very bright, the light is strong.

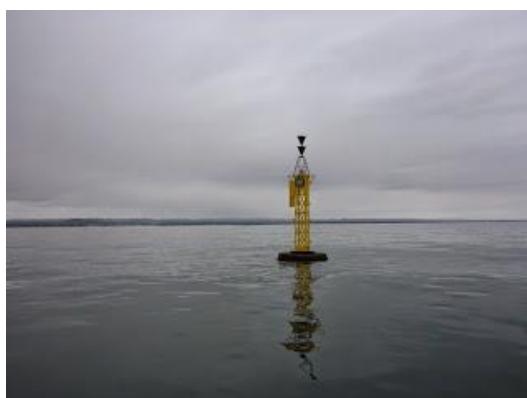


The beach

Returning Jens goes for a swim but not me. As it is Sunday, a ferry brought tourists and the two restaurants are full. We want to support the local economy so we eat also at the restaurant. The fish, fresh and well grilled, is very good and it is so big that we are forced to share a portion of the chocolate cake. We walk a bit to digest and return to Maja. The rescue operation of the yacht aground starts again at high tide, but this time, it is one of the owners' friend who takes charge of it. He has a powerful motor boat, makes the boat tilts and pulls strongly. In five minutes the boat is floating and sails away. Quiet evening. Jens looks at the weather forecast, good tomorrow but bad on Tuesday and Wednesday, so we leave tomorrow.

Monday, November 10, 2014. Culatra(Portugal)-Ayamonte (Spain)

So we leave Culatra, a special island. Jens has calculated that we must leave at 10 am to have the current with us. This current can be strong. Anne and Erik told us that when they came here, they had a strong current of 6-7 knots against them and Dvina was progressing at only half a knot. It took them half an hour to pass the entrance, which usually takes 5 minutes. But today, no problem, the tide has not a big factor. Jens pulls up the anchor and I am at the wheel, when, after pulling 30 m of chain, the winch makes a big "crack" and stops. This is the sound of something broken in it, so Jens pulls the remaining 10 m of chain with his arms. We leave, it's nice and quiet. We motor along the coast, a quiet and uneventful crossing. We pass by a "fish heaven", an area where it is prohibited to fish and to anchor and where fish are safe. It is marked by large yellow mark and measures about 18-20 square km. I hope this is respected.

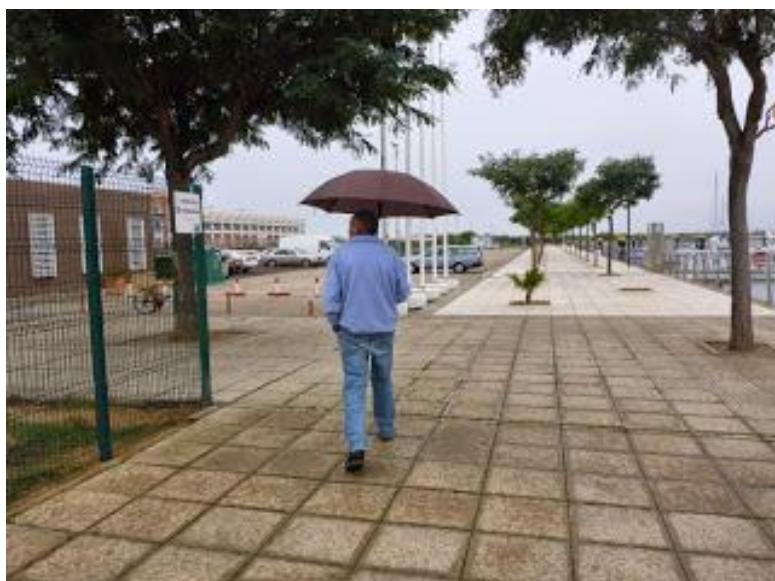


Further we also see large nets to catch tuna but they are well marked and we pass around them. We are approaching the river El Rio Guadiana, which marks the border between Portugal and Spain and there is a marina on each side. We must choose, Portugal or Spain. We decided to go to Spain to Ayamonte Marina which is more easily accessible. Marina Vila Real de Santo Antonio, on the Portuguese side, has a very narrow entrance and our guide said that with the current, it is not always easy to enter.



Up with the Spanish courtesy flag

And besides, we like to speak Spanish! We must therefore change time, Portugal is one hour back from Spain and the rest of Europe. We enter the marina and it just starts to rain, we pass by a boat that looks like a Fisher but is not, and we must take an umbrella to go to the office to register. The marina is almost empty. We go to a supermarket nearby, dine in inside and go for a little walk in the town after dinner.



It's raining. Ayamonte



Ayamonte City Hall by night

Culatra-Ayamonte : 26 nm (47 km)

Florvåg-Ayamonte : $1\ 836 + 26 = 1\ 862$ nm (3 351 km)

Tuesday, 11 November 2014. Ayamonte

Rain, wind and a few sunny periods. We find again our city rhythm; Jens goes and buys fresh bread and newspapers in the morning. Then after breakfast, we go to visit the boat that looks like a Fisher but is not one. She has a Dutch flag and we see several Dutch flags in the marina, it seems they are the majority here. One man, Dutch, on a sailboat tells us that he went to Morocco and had a net caught in the propeller. A fisherman, the owner of the net came to help but didn't succeed. He then proposed to go ashore about ten miles (18 km) and find a diver, but for a fee. They agreed on a price and the fisherman wanted 100 euros in advance, the rest when the operation is done. The Dutch pay 100 euros, the fisherman goes ... and never came back. The Dutchman was forced to send a Pan-Pan, a call for help. And it ended well.

We arrive at "Hannah Brown", the "fake" Fisher. This is a lady who welcomed us, Pia. She invites us on board and we see the boat which is a very good boat, solid, well made and full of clever solutions. The first owner was working in the aluminum industry and the boat is not only built in aluminum but has many aluminum elements. Pia is Dutch but has lived in the United States and sailed over thirty years, first as a couple and now alone. Jens put his nose everywhere, admires, asks questions, this is the kind of boat he loves. Me, I especially admire Pia, a woman of great courage. She has the same age as me and sails alone, this calls for respect. She wants to change marina, cross the river and go to the marina in Vila Real de Santo Antonio, on the Portuguese side, she speaks Portuguese and has many friends there but with the current it is not easy to maneuver the boat and tie her to the pontoon, so we offer us as sailors. We thought about taking the ferry to go to Portugal tomorrow, better to go with Pia. We then go to the city and visit John's chandler, a boating equipment store. John has everything and knows his work. Jens and he discuss the problem with the winch and the pump for the cooling liquid which is leaking. Returning we invite Pia for lunch and we are impressed by her memory. She remembers small coves on the Balearic Islands, Corsica,

Sicily, the Turkish islands ... 20 years later. She has so much to tell, five days of storms in the Atlantic, several years of charter in Turkey, a stopover in the Azores...

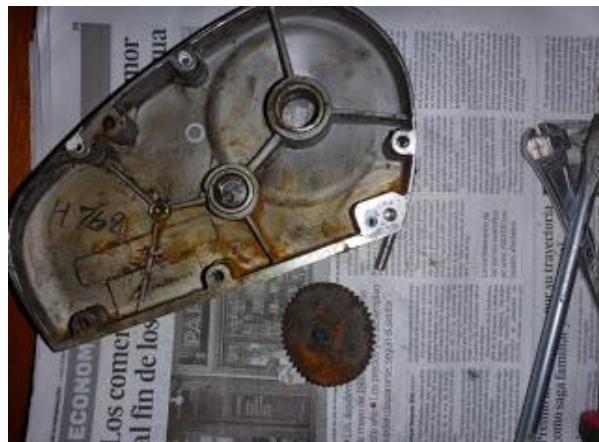


Pia and Jens on "Hanna Brown"



Pia shows nice places on the map

After she left, Jens begins to disassemble the winch that made the "crack" yesterday. Apparently there is water in it, which is not normal. I do the blog and begin to classify and mark our pictures from 2013 to make an album. We remain on Maja, the weather is not nice, it is even necessary to put on heating in the late evening.

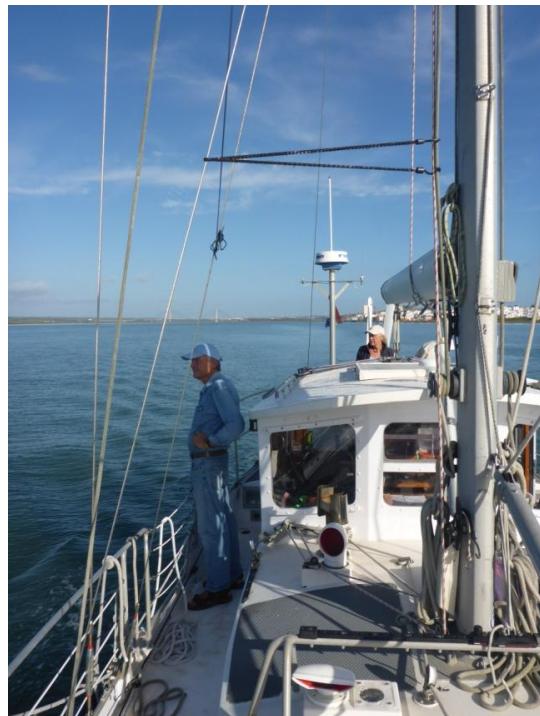


Jens takes the winch apart

Wednesday, November 12, 2014. Ayamonte

The start of our crossing with Pia is set at 11 am, but she comes to us at 9:45 am and asked if we can go earlier. Sure, but first Jens must give a laundry at the launderette. When he comes back we can go and we start at 10:30 am. There is virtually no wind, which is fine, we have enough with the current. Pia is the captain and we, Jens and me, the sailors. Everything is going very well, she leaves the marina here, crosses the river and enters the marina on the other side but it is true that the current enters this marina. When she approaches the pontoon, a marinero grabs a rope I throw to him, Jens ties a mooring in the middle, but even with all that, the current pushes the boat away from the pontoon and this boat is quite heavy. We pull all we can and finally Hannah Brown approaches the pontoon. But the marinero says that we can't stay here, we have to change place. Fortunately, a berth nearby is free and Pia takes Hanna

Brown there. She is happy to be in Vila Real de Santo Antonio, she knows a lot of people here.



On Hanna Brown



Vila Real de Santo Antonio. Marina entrance

She presents us to a Norwegian couple on a boat and they invite us on board. Eli and Bjørn are both 82 years old and came here since 1987 first on vacation and now spend part of their retirement on their boat. They are very friendly, open and like Portugal. We then visit the city. The architecture is special: the city was destroyed in 1755 by the earthquake and the tsunami and rebuilt in a modern design for the time. The streets intersect at right angles, the central square regrouped all administrative functions (town hall), justice (courthouse and prison) and religious (church). An area was reserved for the treatment of fish and another one for trade

and, new for the time, the cemetery was located a bit outside of the city for reasons of hygiene.



Main Square. Vila Real de Santo Antonio



Bjørn and Eli

The city is full of tourists; we hear English, French, German ... while Ayamonte, on the Spanish side hardly has any. It is time for lunch and a "arroz con mariscos" (kind of paella) is tempting me, but you must order two servings. Jens is not enthusiastic, but actually it's delicious, and no offense to the Spanish people, much better than paella, it is more liquid, and well seasoned. We enjoy it. I remember to take a picture when we are almost finished; it had more goodies than on the picture.





The ferry Vila Real (Portugal)-Ayamonte (Spain)

We take the ferry to go home, a ferry that is 48 years old. Jens took it in 1969, not this one another that was there before, but remembers little. It starts to rain and we have to take out the umbrella. We visit a “Chinese” on our way back, Jens has something to buy and we come out fully charged: a small electric heater, a cable, a plastic box, a few tools, a lamp, tape, paint and for me a belt (3.5 €), socks (1.5 €) and two panties (2.7 € for both)! We pay the mad sum of 45 euros (360 kr). It's amazing what they have, for example, ten kinds of birdcages, 50 kinds of plastic boxes, 50 kinds of frames, boxes, glass jars of all kinds ... When it stops raining, Jens repairs the winch. A small wedge which holds the engine is damaged by water and the motor is no longer holdt in place, rubs the side and is no longer working. Jens makes new wooden blocks and repositions the engine, et voila. Light dinner and then stroll into town. On the square, some trees smell good, but I do not know which ones.

Thursday, November 13, 2014. Ayamonte

The forecast predicts rain in the afternoon, so we go for a ride this morning. First we take a path through the marsh, large flooded area between Ayamonte and the sea.



Path in the marshes

Before, a part was used for shellfish farming and another as salt marshes. An old mill was using the tide to turn its wheel.



The mill

But since today is a holiday in Ayamonte, it is the feast of the patron saint of the city, the museum in the mill is closed. We are back in town and out again to the Island Canela, pretty name. It is an island because a thin stretch of sea separates it from the land all around, but it is surrounded by land and is part of the continent. We follow a good bike path along the sea. Isla Canela is a seaside resort but in November it is absolutely deserted; only shellfish harvesters are on the beach.



Isla Canela

Large posters say that it is prohibited to harvest "coquinas" (clams?) and threaten with a € 3,000 fine. I do not want to be scandalmonger but I have a feeling that this is what people are doing on the beach. We round the island and come back by a straight direct road. We pass close to Torre Canela which was built to defend the coast in the seventeenth century but is now several km inland. We arrive at the boat at 1:30 pm, just in time to eat a good lunch; we

made 20 km by bicycle. While we eat lunch, we hear music in town. I jump on my bike and go to take pictures of the procession and fanfare.



The religious procession

In the afternoon, when it starts raining, I do the blog and we tidy up Maja, we are leaving tomorrow for Rome, by plane, to celebrate the anniversary (70 years) of a very good friend of Jens, Jonas, and then visit two other friends in Italy, Krishna and Mauro. A sailboat arrives and we are impressed, arriving by this wind and this rain. And we recognize Thomas and Elke on their "Max", the German couple we had seen in Bayona, in Sesimbra and in Lagos. I go and talk with them: they do not come from the sea, but from the river. We invite them to dinner, Jens is cooking a dish of meatballs we had in the freezer and there is enough for four. They arrive at 7 pm in heavy rain. We dine together and it is very nice. Men talk at length about the different types of anchor, large and inexhaustible subject. They leave at 9:30 pm, still in pouring rain. We wash the dishes and make our luggage, tomorrow is a new start. Maja remains in this marina which is safe.



Elke and Thomas

Friday, November 14, 2014. Ayamonte (Spain) – Rome (Italy)



No taxi

We walk to the taxi station in Ayamonte, 5 minutes from the marina. Usually there are always several taxis, but today no one in sight. Jens phones, but no answer. People around are friendly and try to help, but still nothing. Finally, after a quarter of an hour a taxi arrives. And we are en route to Faro, Portugal. The driver and we) are solving Spain's problems en route. Flight from Faro to Lisbon but arrived in Lisbon, we are 40 minutes stuck in the plane; there is a problem with the bridge. We finally exit through the back door, and it took them 40 minutes to find this solution. Scheduled departure for Rome at 2:20 pm (Portuguese time) but we start one hour later. TAP, the Portuguese company is not high in my esteem right now. Arrival in Rome at night, and shuttle to the hotel which is close to St. Peter's Basilica, we are neighbors with the Pope. We hear Jonas before we see him in the dining room, he is dining with those of his friends who have already arrived. We, we are going to eat a minestrone and a pizza in a small street behind. The hotel is a palace built in the sixteenth century for a cardinal, it's historical and beautiful. Then blog (already well advanced in the plane) and in bed, a real bed in a house, it changes us.



Change of scenery! Saint peter of Rome

Saturday, November 15, 2014. Rome

Today we celebrate Jonas' birthday. For those who do not know him, a small presentation. Jonas and Jens have known each other since early childhood. As a child, he lived in Sørvad, a village in Jutland (western part of Denmark) where Trine, Jens' mother came from. Jens used to spend every holiday in Sørvad at his grandparents' house and played with Jonas. Together, they built a rocket that was to take them to the moon, but, because of a small planning mistake, didn't fly being nailed down on the floor. When they were 16-17 years old, they began to travel together, first by bike (to Sweden), then by train (to Norway, France and Italy). Then their paths diverged, but they always met again with much pleasure. Jonas was first a teacher and began working as a guide, and what a guide. He traveled everywhere, knows a lot about the visited places and is extremely popular. People organize their trips to have Jonas as a guide. And now Jonas wanted to reunite his family and friends here in Rome. The meeting is international: Denmark, Sweden and Norway are represented and a couple of friends, Jean and Brian, even came from the United States. Jean met Jonas by chance on a train in the seventies! They began to discuss, continued in Copenhagen Station, corresponded, have visited each other several times since and are friends to this day. A beautiful story.



Jonas' birthday

This morning, champagne in one of the dining rooms of the hotel and then we all leave on foot for the restaurant. Jonas gives us the benefit of his knowledge of Rome and guides us.



Our guide in Rome: Jonas

He shows us a building where he lived when he was working in Rome and his office. We arrive at the restaurant on the Plaza Navona and Jonas welcomes Berit an old Norwegian lady of 87 years, a retired teacher, who travels only with Jonas. Last year she went to Burma and she tells us how Jonas convinced her to buy the necklace she is wearing today.



Jonas and Berit



The cake

We occupy two large tables on the sidewalk and as it is not hot, heaters between tables are welcome. The food is excellent, but after several small dishes, we are more than satisfied, we just have a little room for the tiramisu. The atmosphere is very friendly. Many of Jonas friends don't know each other, but have heard of the other ones, the conversation goes from Swedish and Danish to English through Norwegian. All have good memories to tell where Jonas plays a role. We remain around the table until 6 pm, then some return by taxi and others (us) on foot ... under rain and thunder. Jens buys an umbrella, I have mine and we start walking under the rain.

A very special day that will be remembered long. Jonas, thank you so much for this very nice and friendly party.



We walk home. The party is over

Sunday, November 16, 2014. Rome

Light breakfast with Jonas and some of his friends, and then at 11:45 am, we meet all in the hotel reception: Jonas takes us to see the Pope, who, like every Sunday when he is in Rome, makes a speech from his window and blesses the crowd.



The Pope

Then the others will take taxis to go to a restaurant a bit far. Jens and I walk there and leave right away.



Rome

We walk and walk, admire these imposing monuments of Rome, but we get lost a little and get to La Lampada, the restaurant at 1:15 pm. This restaurant has an extensive buffet of

various starters, small whole artichoke (and they are melting on the tongue), grilled eggplant, zucchini sautéed ... That would make a meal, but after that a lasagna comes to which one can't resist. What a meal.



Jens and Jonas

We set off on foot but it rains, so we see Rome, once again, under rain. We pass the Temple of Hadrian and the Pantheon. This city is full of history on every street corner. We have walked at least 10 km today. Jens naps, newspaper (El País, Spanish) for me and blog. At 8 pm, we dine together, a light dinner here at the hotel. Jonas and one of his colleagues, Ulla, tell about their trips to Sri Lanka, India, Mexico ... They have been everywhere and are good story tellers.

Monday 17.November 2014. Rome

After breakfast together, very friendly, we start to walk through Rome and move to our friends Krishna and Clara. Before leaving Jonas, I want to thank him again, he has the gift to make people who don't know each other form a well functioning group . I know, it's his job, but he does it so well, so naturally that after two days together, we all leave like old friends. We walk, walk carrying our backpacks, it does not rain but it is very gray. We pass a market, colorful and well stocked, where a very good seller sells a small device which cuts cucumbers, carrots etc in spiral. I help a truck driver, directing him with my hands, to pass between two rows of parked cars.



We have coffee near the Colosseum, imposing monument if ever there was one. We arrive near a pyramid, which in my innocence, I thought modern, but which is in fact 2000 years old!



The pyramid

Krishna and Clara live nearby. We get lost a little, Krishna and Clara come to meet us and we meet again with much pleasure. Krishna is a seismologist, former colleague and friend of Jens in Mexico. We leave our luggage at their apartment and out again to eat in a small restaurant. The food is so good! We take what we want at a counter, the food is weighed and we pay by weight. Good system.



Jens,

Then we have coffee at another place and it starts raining dogs and cats. We are developing an umbrella stealing plan in this café: there are at least 10 umbrellas in the umbrella stand, more

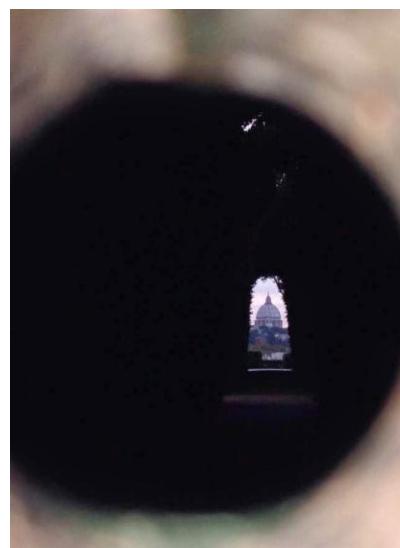
than the 5-6 clients, so some umbrellas are forgotten here. But honest, we give up our plan. The rain subsides and we return quickly to the apartment. The afternoon passes quickly, nap for the other three ones and blog for me. Then shopping in the rain (I don't go), light and friendly dinner, the four of us, at home.



The four of us

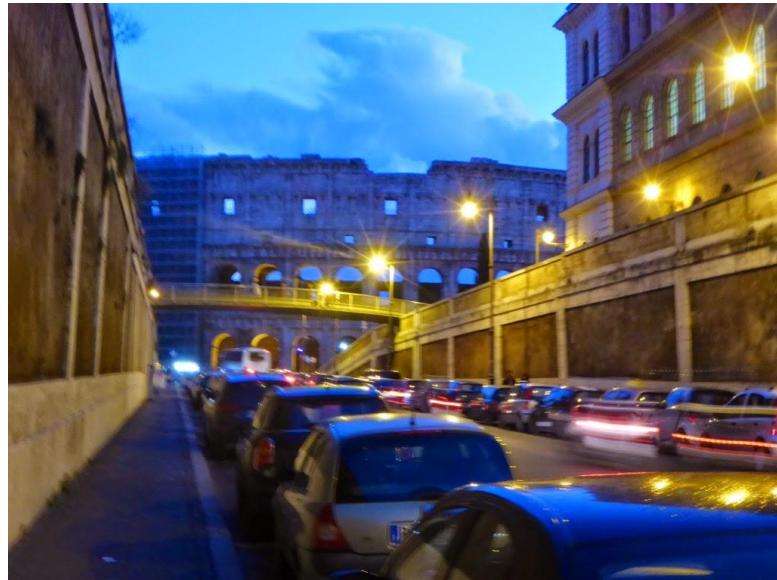
Tuesday, November 18, 2014. Rome

The weather forecast announces rain this afternoon, so we go for a walk in the morning the four of us. Krishna and Clara take us on a nearby hill, we go to a park where there is a beautiful view of the city, then they show us a large wooden gate, which is closed but with a small hole as big as a two-euros coin and they tell us to look through the hole: we see in front and far away, St. Peter's Basilica. I try to make a picture, can't do it (and there are several persons in line behind me) but Clara has a good picture she lends me and I publish it today.



St Peter Basilica seen in the key hole

We go down to the Coliseum and then we part, they have things to do on their own. We go back, eat lunch at home and then off again this time by metro, to go and buy our bus tickets for Friday, we go to Perugia. Very easy to take the subway, our station is called Piramide and all subway trains are articulated and very, very long. We get off at Tiburtina station and find the bus station, buy our tickets and begin to walk back home. We pass a lots of students, it is the faculty of medicine, we walk and walk, pass the large Termini train station and then it starts to rain.



The Coliseum by night

We arrive at the Coliseum that we circle and must take shelter under the canopy of a petrol station. It's funny, the attendants fill the tanks of cars sheltered under umbrellas. And finally we come to the apartment. We walked at least 10 km today. Good and quiet evening with Krishna and Clara.

Wednesday, November 19, 2014. Rome

Krishna and Clara leave very early for Naples by train to attend a funeral.



Italian parking

We, Jens and me, are going back to the market we saw on Monday when coming, Piazza de Fiori and see again Piazza Navona. We walk along the Tiber, the river, which has a strong current at this time of the year and brown water. We pass a bridge and visit the small island in the middle. Then we walk and arrive at the market, then at the Piazza Navona, which we see finally under the sun.



Piazza Navona

We rest a bit then leave and take the small streets. What a city, so ancient, civilization on civilization and still so alive today. At a fountain, we see a man drinking and filling a bottle, so we drink too. One thing I forgot to say, seeing a small sign "Stamps and mailbox", I bought stamps, but it's a private company, a competitor of the Italian Post Office and, actually, there are very few of these mailboxes. So I had to buy new real stamps. We arrive at the famous Spanish Steps that rise to the Villa Medici. We continue, on foot, to the Coliseum, the Pyramid and the neighborhood where we live.



We go shopping

But before going home, we go shopping for dinner tonight. Back, quite tired, Jens falls asleep reading the newspaper (El País as always) and I blog. Then I prepare a baked chicken and ratatouille. Krishna and Clara comes back at 7:30 pm, very tired, we have a good dinner and spent a good evening together. But at 10 pm, everyone goes to bed, we are no longer twenty years old.

Thursday, 20 november 2014. Rome

We take the metro all together, and entering the subway, I almost follow the wrong man, Jens has a lookalike, a man with gray hair and a yellow anorak.



Jens has a lookalike in Rome

We go again to the Spanish steps, walk to the Piazza del Popolo through the Via Margutta, a street with shops selling antiques.



No comment

We arrive at the Piazza del Popolo, large bustling square. Then we go and cross the Villa Borghese Park. It is lunch time and we are not far from the good restaurant where we had lunch Sunday with Jonas, La Lampada, so we return there. The starters, antipasti, are varied and excellent. But today, there is no lasagna, only on Sundays, but the pasta is also very good. After lunch, we split up, Krishna and Clara take the subway to go home and we'll walk. We walked a lot in Rome! At home, we have a quiet late afternoon, a good dinner of salad, cheese, a little red wine (this is not breakfast!) and very good ice cream. Last evening together, we leave tomorrow by bus to Perugia. But we come back here Monday night.



No comment

Friday, November 21, 2014. Rome-Perugia

Farewells (for the time being) to Krishna and Clara, subway to the bus station and boarding without problem in a nice bus. Jens asks information (in a kind of Hispano-Italian) to a young man who, hearing me speak French, replies in French too. He is in fact a young priest from Haiti who takes the bus to Assisi, the same bus as us. Pretty autumn scenery, beautiful weather at the beginning and foggy and gray when we approach Perugia.



Landscape

The journey takes two hours and fifteen minutes and at 12: 45 pm, we are in Perugia. Mauro awaits us and takes us to his home where we meet again Claudia, his wife, Andrea (his 17 year old son) and Alessia (his daughter, 12 years and a half old). The children have changed since the last time we saw them, in Norway and Denmark in July 2008. Mauro is a manufacturer of seismometers that Jens has known for a long time. In 2007, we lived with them while Jens attended a conference of Seismology in Perugia, and the following year they came on holiday in Norway and Denmark. Claudia has cooked us a very good risotto.



Mauro, Alessia, Claudia, Andrea, Jeannette

Andrea and Alessia are finished at school at 1 pm and don't go back there. They go to school from 8 am to 1 pm, from Monday to Saturday, 6 days a week. They have a lot of homework; Alessia spends 3-4 hours a day doing her homework! After lunch, Mauro and Jens leave for Mauro's factory, I stay at home with Claudia and Alessia. Andrea is doing his homework in another room. Claudia has to help Alessia, although she is a very good student, with very complicated math exercises. What do the children who don't have parents who can help them? Alessia also has French lessons to learn and there I can help a little. At 7:30 pm, the men return and Mauro takes us to a nearby hotel where we deposit our stuff and we come back at once, but in a narrow one way street, a car which has a engine failure is blocking the traffic. I don't have my camera with me, too bad. This lasts quite a time, the blocked cars must back down, the old lady passenger in the stopped car is American and apparently also the young people who try to help, in any case, within two minutes, everyone is speaking English ... except the poor Italians trapped behind. But all this is calm and friendly. We leave on foot, Jens and I, we are five minutes from Mauro's home; and Mauro arrives by car shortly after, the situation is unblocked. Very good dinner of excellent homemade pizzas and then we return to the hotel, Jens and I, walking. We walk fast to keep us warm, the temperature is only 9°.

Saturday, November 22, 2014. Perugia

We take breakfast at the hotel, the "Le Fontanelle" we are the only guests in the dining room. Then we walk to Mauro and Claudia's house, a 20 minutes' walk. They take us to see the old Perugia, a city more than two thousand years old, big city already under the Etruscans in 400 BC! Again, several civilizations were built on each other and people today still use the same

streets as their distant ancestors. But to get to Perugia, we take a very modern means of transport, a fully automatic mini-metro which brings us under the old town.



The mini-metro



The Etruscan gate

We pass from the twenty-first century (metro) to the fourth century BC in five minutes when we see the Etruscan Well, a very deep well that supplied the city with water. Again, what a city full of history, ancient monuments, Renaissance palaces, churches, gates, walls, arches, tunnels ... We take the metro back also and Claudia explains that people wearing red clothes are going to the stadium: this afternoon, a football match is opposing Perugia to Terni, another city of Umbria and the color of the Perugia team is red (as Brann team in Bergen). We arrive home and Mauro leaves to pick up Andrea and Alessia who are in school. Good lunch

together, then Mauro and Jens go to work. Alessia starts her homework. At 5 pm, the whole family goes to a religious meeting, and we stay at home, Jens and me, and work. They return at 7 pm and we have dinner together. Jens made a fire in the stove and Claudia bought chestnuts, it is really fall. Another good evening together. We return to the hotel at 10 pm, walking.

Sunday, November 23, 2014. Perugia

We go early at Mauro and Claudia's house, the men have work to do together in Mauro's laboratory with seismometers, and on Jens' suggestion, they walk. Mauro's enterprise is called SARA, which means: Anonymous Society of Automotive Repair! Mauro's father had started a small car repair business and later on has specialized in electronics, first alarms, and then red lights regulatory mechanisms. Mauro is a self-made man and is a specialist in seismometers, which is why he and Jens became involved together. Mauro's father still works in the company and Claudia works in the administration.



In Mauro's laboratory. Claudia, Jens, Mauro

Alessia is busy with her homework and is working the whole morning, on a Sunday! Claudia, Andrea, Alessia and I pick up Mauro and Jens and we leave in two cars to a restaurant on a nearby hill, where we have a beautiful view of Perugia, but the restaurant is closed. We drive down and go to another restaurant where we lunch very well, so well that we stop before dessert, we'll go out for ice cream later. The men go back to work and we, the others, are going home. I hear Andrea, who is playing guitar on the second floor, and, well, he is good. Later, Claudia, Alessia and I first go to the grandparents, Mauro's parents. We know each from our visit here in 2007. I am pleased to greet them again and we can communicate: they speak Spanish because they lived ... in Germany! Most of their neighbors and colleagues there were Spanish and so they learned both German and Spanish. Alessia is staying with her grandparents and Claudia and I we drive to pick up Mauro and Jens and the four of us leave the city and drive to Foligno, a town about twenty miles from Perugia where a seismic station is installed in an outbuilding on a convent park. Before it was in town, but too many external vibrations blurred the results, here in the convent it is much quieter. A local man joins us and we enter the convent garden, the convent is a large building that is under repair because it was damaged by an earthquake in 1987. The seismic station is in an old abandoned small house in

the park. From here to there is a beautiful views on Foligno and the mountains, but we see fog in the valley. Mauro works, there is something to change, then we leave and night drive back to Perugia. Last light dinner, only the four adults, Andrea and Alessia are with friends and we walk back to the hotel at around 9 pm. And the ice-creams that were supposed to be our dessert at lunch? We forgot them.



The convent



The abandoned house



The seismometer

Monday, November 24, 2014. Rome

Mauro picks up Jens at 8 am; I stay at the hotel to do the blog. At 11 am, I have to check out and I go to a big shopping center nearby, and I could be in Paris, Madrid or Oslo, all these malls are alike. The supermarket is huge, I go there, it's always interesting to see the differences between the foods from different countries. Here, of course, the pasta shelves are at least one kilometer long! (No, I'm exaggerating). I also see the "stoccafisso", the "stokfisk" Norwegian i.e. a dried fish, very dried (his name means it's hard as a stick) that comes from Lofoten, northern Norway. Then I walk to see Mauro and Jens at the laboratory where they are working. Claudia drives to pick up Alessia at school and we have lunch the three of us, then Andrea joins us. Claudia bought "torta al testo", a kind of pizza with dough above and below, filled with good things. After the meal, Alessia draws a very nice drawing. Then we say farewell, Mauro takes us to the bus station and we take the bus to Rome. How to thank

them for their welcome and their kindness? I hope we meet again, perhaps in Norway, or at our boat somewhere ... Again thank you. Uneventful voyage to Rome, some fog on the road.



Fog

I take this bus trip at an opportunity to erase many photos from my camera; they are on the computer anyway. In Rome, we take the subway and stop, as regulars, at the "Piramide" station. We find again Krishna and Clara with pleasure and spend a last good dinner together. With the help of a good bottle of wine, we solve the world's problems, if only the politicians could listen to us. They too received us with great kindness and I thank them from my heart. We hope to see them soon. Where? When? ¿Quién sabe?



Two good friends. Jens and Krishna

Tuesday 25 november 2014. Rome-Ayamonte

Nice breakfast together and then we leave. We take the train at 9 am, directly to the airport, the station is 10 minutes from Krishna's home, which is convenient. As much Rome center is beautiful and historic as much its suburbs, as many suburbs, are not very beautiful.



A map in the plane. Bergen is marked

The plane of TAP (Portuguese) leaves on time and arrives on time in Lisbon. While arriving from east, we make a circle over Lisbon and come from west, so we can see the sea and the estuary by which we arrived by boat. In Lisbon we take a coffee and a "tarta de nata", these little Portuguese pastries. At this cafe, a lady has just washed the floor and the employees put papers under their foot and "skate", not to dirty it again.



They are skating

Re-start of an uneventful flight, quiet and on time, TAP goes up in my esteem. We fly over Ilha Culatra, the sandy island where we were anchored around 15 days ago. Arrival at Faro at 4 pm (Portuguese time) and taxi to Ayamonte (Spain) where we arrive at 6 pm (Spanish time, 5 pm in Portugal). The driver speaks French very well, having lived twenty years in France.

He is grumbling against corruption in Portugal: the former prime minister has just been jailed, accused of embezzling millions of euros. We find our Maja as beautiful as we had left her, everything is in order and we also find a bottle of wine left by Elke and Thomas to thank us for our dinner together and the food that we had given them before leaving, that's nice. And here we are, back home after a pleasant trip to Italy, first with Jonas, then with Mauro and his family and finally with Krishna and Clara, all different and all very good friends of ours.

Wednesday, November 26, 2014. Ayamonte

We take advantage of the good weather in the morning to go for a walk in town. Ayamonte, as its name suggests, is an old city built on a hill.



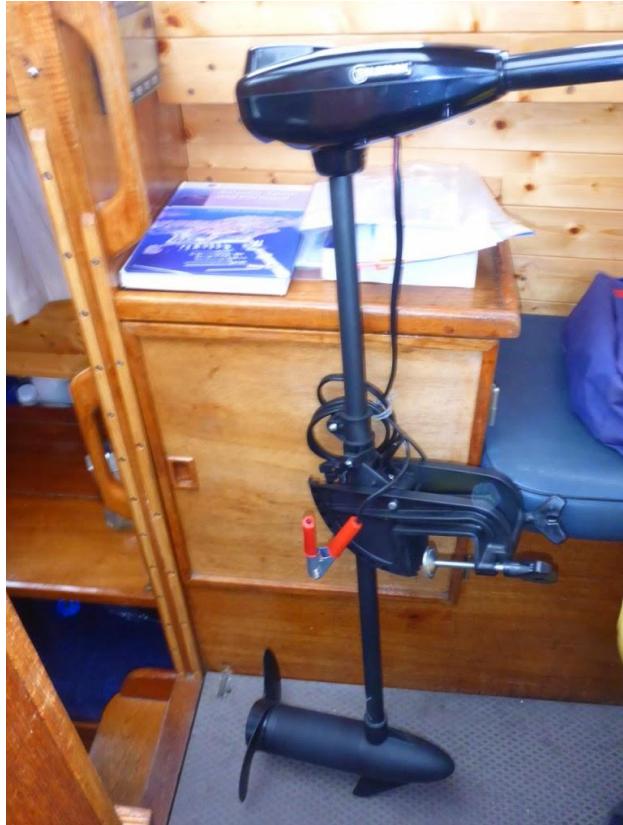
Ayamonte

The streets go up and down and even stairs do the same. We deliver clothes to the laundry and the lady at the launderette is French. We find the tourist office that is installed in a palace from the fifteenth century; the patio is full of plants. We walk along the river which is very broad here, and as the tide is very low, a kind of muddy “beach” is discovered and I can see lots of polished pieces of glass.



The muddy “beach”

The problem is that we can't go to this "beach", there is no access and that is at least two meters lower than the street. I think of coming back at the next low tide with a ladder. We go back to the boat and it starts raining. Lunch at the boat and Jens visits John, the guy who has the chandler, the boat things shop. It's dangerous to let Jens there. He returned later with a gift for me. Very nice, my husband. This gift is an electric motor for the tender!



My gift

And in addition he has ordered a new anchor, much better than the one we have. OK, these are two good purchases, I agree, it's "godkjent" (accepted, recognized of public utility, in Norwegian). The rest of the afternoon, it's raining and it's cool. Jens puts on the electric heating; we are now connected to land. In fact we have two electric heaters: one that heats up quickly but makes noise, it has a fan, and when it's warm enough, another, smaller and silent one which maintains the good temperature. Quiet evening, cosy and with a good book.

Thursday, November 27, 2014. Ayamonte

Very changeable weather, heavy rain and sunny periods. The nights are cool, 10-12 ° but when the sun appears it can be 20 ° quickly. In the morning, Jens goes and buys fresh bread but the newsagent is not open, so I go later to buy two newspapers. We are still reading "El País" and "Huelva Información," the local newspaper. We go together to bring back the clothes from the laundry and take a coffee on a terrace. On returning we meet the original man in Ayamonte, a man carrying all his possessions on a trolley. This is the second time we see him. And the first time he was insulting passersby and grumbling very loudly ... in Danish!



The (Danish) original man in Ayamonte

Jens asked John about a boatyard on the other side, in Portugal, where we could get Maja out of the water. The plan is to navigate the Guadiana to the north a few days, come down and put Maja on land when we leave for Denmark and Norway in early December. According to him, this is a good site but we want to see it. So after lunch, outside on Maja, we take the ferry and walk to the boatyard. The young woman who receives us speaks good English (better than Spanish, in fact), shows us the facilities and announces the price. When the boat is on land, we can live in her, they have showers and toilets. Jens is impressed by the cleanliness and great safety with which the boats are berthed and secured. We agree on a date, she has to consider the tide: the boats can be pulled out of the water only at fairly high tide. This will be a new experience. We walk a little in Villa Real de Santo Antonio, with the straight streets, but that seems more dead than Ayamonte then we take the ferry back, an old ferry, built in 1946, and Portuguese this time and go home. In the evening it began to rain very hard and the forecast announces strong winds for the night.



The ferry is 68 years old

Friday, November 28, 2014. Ayamonte

What a night! The wind blew very strongly, a real storm, accompanied by torrential rain from 10 pm to 3-4 am. This made such a noise that I couldn't sleep, but Jens slept well. Fortunately we were in a safe marina and we were well moored. This morning, all is calm again. One thing I wanted to tell for a long time and I forgot. Here in Ayamonte we hear often two melodies in the streets, always the same, "Letter to Elise" by Beethoven and "When the saints go marching in". First I didn't know from where they were coming, but I found their origin: they are from the trucks that deliver gas cylinders to private houses, to announce their arrival! Jens works to put the new battery on a safe place and to plug it: when we don't use it on the tender, it is connected to Maja and thus helps to provide us with more electricity. He makes a hole in the partition between the doghouse and the salon and this hole is in a space full of electric wires and cables. My job is to keep them away from the saw ... and my fingers too. Jens needs wood to make a support for the new battery, but no problem. All the space under my bed (and his own) is occupied by a supply of wood.



Reserve of wood under my bed

At one o'clock we lunch outside in the sun on Maja, and then go for a walk. We follow the Guadiana, come down on the "beach" and pick pieces of glass.



Polished pieces of glass

To climb on the street again, Jens pushes me up in a rather inelegant way. We continue north and come to the edge of town and then we come home. We have walked two hours. Jens finishes his work and blog for me. We dine in town this evening at a restaurant where only two tables are occupied. I take a stuffed eggplant and Jens takes lamb chops. It is strange, Portuguese people don't eat mutton or lamb, the waiter tells us that they come from Portugal to eat it here. We run home, it is raining and we have no umbrella. If the weather is good tomorrow, we leave to navigate up river.



A stock nest

Saturday, November 29, 2014. Ayamonte (Spain)-Foz de Odeleite (Portugal)

We will leave today, the weather is nice, but not until in the afternoon because of the tide. In the morning I go and visit the Museum of the Doll, which is only open on Friday and Saturday. They really have a lot of dolls and even a poor doll head, in bad shape, which could come from the Titanic. Another curiosity is the doll Cayetana named in honor of a little girl called like that. And, coincidentally, this Cayetana, Duchess of Alba, has died at age 88 a few days ago.



The doll "Cayetana"

Then I go to the Chinese to do some shopping. We lunch, Jens has paid the marina, and we leave at 3 pm when the tide turns and starts to rise. But what we forget is that here, it changes well after our table and therefore we go against the current most of the afternoon. It doesn't matter, we just go slower. Leaving the marina, we see Divna a little downstream, the Norwegian yacht owned by Anne and Erik that we met in Culatra. We call them by radio, but no answer. Maybe they are on land. Just outside of Ayamonte, I see two storks, one flying and the other seeking food in the mud. We pass under the big bridge and I hoist the two courtesy flags, Spanish and Portuguese as we navigate on the border.



I hoist the two courtesy flags. The bridge back

We meet Ovacet, a boat we saw in Culatra too. The Guadiana water is very brown and carries a lot of branches, palm leaves and other debris because it rained a lot lately. We go to the first pontoon upstream at 8 nm (15 km). The banks are quite deserted, but the landscape is green, bush like, little grows here. We arrive at Foz de Odeleite, a small village that has a pontoon for visitors. Because of the current, finally with us, docking is not easy, especially when two boats already are moored and there is not much room. We need to try twice. Finally, I jump ashore, put the first mooring rope to the back and Maja, pushed by the current begins to rotate, her "nose" away from the dock. Jens quickly throw me the rope forward but I have some problem, Maja really pulls hard. Jens jumps on land and helps me.



Maja. Foz de Odeleite (Portugal)

The pontoon, new in 2009, is broken, the electricity terminal is out of order, some bollards have disappeared, and both boats had been here a while, they are full of debris that are stuck around them and there is no one on board. We take a walk in the village before dark. It's pretty depressing, abandoned houses, uncultivated gardens and an awful large unfinished concrete construction which dominates the whole village. But the village is very well lit, modern streetlights with buried cables are placed every fifty meters. I am bad minded, I imagine that the streetlights merchant paid the mayor to make him install the famous street lights. The current of the river is strong and comes mainly from the tide; it is reversed every six hours. We dine and spend a quiet evening, not a sound except that of the flowing water and, before it is dark, a lot of birds.



The Guadiana River

Ayamonte-Foz de Odeleite : 8 nm (14 km)
Florvåg-Foz de Odeleite : $1\ 862 + 8 = 1\ 870$ nm (3 366 km)

Sunday, November 30, 2014. Guerreiros do Rio

It is gray and a little cold (11°) when we wake up and Jens lit the stove, but he wants to eat outside anyway so I put on two sweaters, my jacket and a blanket. Then we walk through the village that doesn't look better today than yesterday and head towards west. A good track is indicated as a hiking trail and we take it. We pass near a gathering of hunters with their dogs and guns, ready to go. The landscape is pretty, hills covered with small bushes but there is little culture. We go back after an hour and a half and we "set sail", figuratively as we are motoring. We continue north on the Guadiana and think to stop at the next village with a pontoon at 3 nm (5 km). And, surprise, we meet Fitou, Francis and Yolande's yacht, who themselves are heading south. We stop for a chat and are drifting south together in the middle of the river for a few minutes, we are still against the current, but it doesn't matter since we have only 5 km to go. We are happy to see them and Francis gives me his email address, so we can keep in touch. We arrive at Guerreiros do Rio, the next village, where the pontoon is empty. Docking smoothly and, immediately, better impression than yesterday, the pontoon is in order, the path bridge from the pontoon arrives in a small square that is the center of the village with a small cafe filled with customers.



Guerreiros do Rio



Maja. Guerreiros do Rio

We lunch on Maja but we take coffee at the café. Among the clients, there is a group of foreigners, English, German and Belgian who apparently live here. Then we are happy to ride our bikes, it's been a long time since we used them and we head north along the river, on a nice quiet road. A Laranjeira, the next village, the ruins of a Roman villa have been restored and are open to the public, so we go and see them. Here, too, there is a pontoon for visitors and several boats, including a Norwegian, are anchored. We return to Guerreiros do Rio and go to the café to have a "panaché" and ask them their Wi-Fi code, I work a little on the blog and we take the code with us ... to use on the boat later. Jens prepares a leg of goat he bought at the market in Ayamonte and we really enjoy it. He does it in the oven with potatoes,

peppers and onions, all golden brown, it's really good. I can't cook, I'm busy writing the blog...



The leg of goat

Foz de Odeleite-Guerreiros do Rio : 3 nm (5 km)
Florvåg-Guerreiros do Rio : 1 870 + 3 = 1 873 nm (3 371 km)

Monday, 1 December 2014. Guerreiros do Rio



First time we on our "kjedress"
Jens is eating an orange we picked up selv

It's gray and cold this morning, 10°, so we put on the warm overalls, for the first time of the trip. But when the sun appears, we quickly take them off; it will be a beautiful day, sunny and warm (20-22 °).



Just to take picture of a flower!

We ride our bikes northwards to see Alcoutim, the next town, and as it is 10 km away, it's just a good bike ride. Just outside of Guerreiros do Rio, I see beautiful flowers in the bottom of a ditch, so I go down, it is steep and wet with dew, what one must do for the blog. A little further on, a white van beckons us to stop. It also stops and it is the municipal employee responsible to recover the fees for the boats staying at the pontoon.



He stops to make us pay

We pay 7.5 € per night, that's OK. We set off and it goes up, the river makes a great bend but the road cuts straight through the mountain.



The Guadiana River

From the top we have a beautiful view. Alcoutim seems animated, all white and full of English people. We see in front, on the Spanish side, the small town facing Alcoutim, Sanlúcar de Guadiana. The pontoons in Alcoutim are good and there is room, so tomorrow we come here by boat. A good lunch in the sun, two grilled sandwiches, two beers, two small cakes for € 9 for two. We return, pushed by the wind and Jens sees a snake on the road. I think he's dead, he is still, but when Jens tickles it with a stick, he wakes up and doesn't look happy. He rises up, hisses and disappears in the grass on the side of the road.

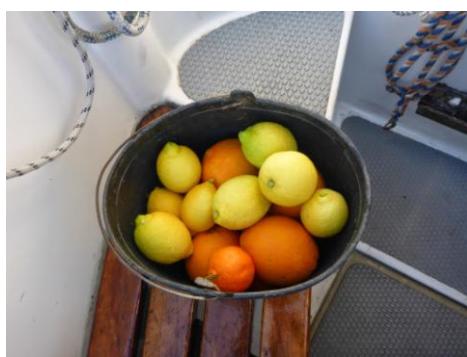


The snake

Diner is the kid's leg, and after dinner, a local gentleman, comes to see us. We invite him to see the boat and he sits down to talk a little, in a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish. After a few minutes, he made us understand that talking makes him thirsty ... and doesn't refuse a Spanish brandy. He is interesting, born in this village, a military man who has traveled and returned here to spend his retirement. His son in law has the little café on the quay and his daughter is responsible of the River Museum that we will see tomorrow, it is closed today. He fishes a lot, especially eels and sells them at a good price.

Tuesday, December 2, 2014. Alcoutim

I have not slept very well, the wind was blowing and the current was running against the wind at the beginning of the night, the wind from the north and the current from the south, ie rising tide. There were waves, not very big but Maja moved a little and the ropes and the fenders (these kind of sausages we put between the boat and the pontoon) creaked and squeaked. I asked at least five times Jens if we were well moored and then he fell asleep, but I didn't. Around midnight, change of scenario, the wind is still from the north but the current turns, and comes also from the north. Everything becomes quieter, the ropes and the fender don't make noise anymore but another concern is that the current is stronger now. The tide is added to the natural flow of the river and it makes a stronger current. In the other direction, the natural flow of the river is subtracted from the tide and the current is less strong. I fell asleep and Jens, nice man, let me sleep a little longer this morning. He even made a picture of João, the guy who came to see us yesterday, emptying his nest before I wake up. This same João offers us a bucket of lemons, clementines and oranges, fresh picked from the trees, this is awfully nice.



We go to visit the Museum of the river, but the woman in charge is drinking coffee at the café so we'll drink one too. She tells us that there are only thirty people in the village and only two children (her own daughter and a little boy) who go to school in Alcoutim. Yet the village seems alive but she tells us the population is on decline and she is pessimistic about the future. The museum is well done, very interesting and shows in particular, about thirty traditional model boats made by one man.



At the museum

The Guadiana measures 830 km and was much sailed over the centuries, from the Romans, Muslims and thereafter. A film tells about the smuggling that was done between Portugal and Spain. The men swam pulling bales of coffee, tobacco, meat ... Some old smugglers tell their story, it was that or misery. An old customs officer also said that he was not too severe. Then we leave Guerreiros do Rio for Alcoutim, with the current.



Arrival in Alcoutim

It is very beautiful, fast and pleasant. Jens tries to approach the pontoon with the flow but that is not possible, the current pushes us away from it. So we approach against the current without problem. But we have now the cockpit, where we have the table outside, facing north, in the shade. So we rotate the boat with ropes, both of us on the pontoon, it goes well and like that we can eat lunch on Maja in the sun. We then put the tender on the pontoon and Jens wants to install the electric motor then he'll try it on the water.



Jens is trying the electric engine

It works well and is completely silent. He picks me up, and we leave. All is well. Jens always a scientist carries the GPS and measures the speed at which we are going. We go back to Maja, Jens removed the engine and we leave again, rowing, it takes ten minutes to cross to Spain. We go up to the castle, a good climb, but it is closed. We also see a cable that you can use with a harness and slide down to Portugal, but it is not working at the moment. Sanlúcar de Guadiana, the Spanish village looks dead compared to Alcoutim, we can't even buy a newspaper. Back in Portugal, rowing and quiet evening.



Alcoutim seen from Sanlucar do Guadiana (Spain)

Guerreiros do Rio-Alcoutim : 4 nm (7 km)

Florvåg-Alcoutim : $1\ 873 + 4 = 1\ 877$ nm (3 378 km)

Wednesday, December 3, 2014. Alcoutim

Cold (8°) and foggy this morning. The man who is charging fees for the pontoon comes to see us, we must pay here too and besides, he asks us to move Maja, while the pontoon is almost empty, and with the current it is not that easy. He helps us but the current pushes Maja away from the pontoon and even three of us can't hold her. Jens quickly climbs on the boat and start the engine, and with its help, it is OK. We then go and visit the castle here in Alcoutim. Alcoutim (Portugal) has a castle facing the castle of Sanlúcar (Spain). The sun doesn't appear today and it is cool. After lunch, we wanted to go for a ride in Spain, taking the bikes on the small ferry, but both ferries are on the other side, so we go for a ride here in Portugal. We take a hiking trail that goes up and up and up. We go up one hour and forty five minutes!



We climb one hour and forty minutes



Nice view over Spain

Nice view from the top, then continue a bit and find a beautiful road that goes directly to Alcoutim, it takes us fifteen minutes to come back, all downhill, we deserve it.



Now it's downhill all the way

Back on Maja, we see children kayaking, first with the current, it goes fast and they go far away, but to come back is something else ... A young man (the leader?) is the last to leave and the first to return, the children come back alone, they look tired, one is soaked and none is wearing a lifejacket.

Thursday, December 4, 2014. Alcoutim (Portugal)-Ayamonte (Spain)

Foggy this morning too, but that dissipates quickly, and it is only 7 °, the coldest we have had until now. We cross to Spain in the tender, carrying the two folded bicycles, it makes a funny loading and the small boat is low into the water and we must not move too much, we don't feel very stable. Jens thinks it is funny, me a little less. But in fact it goes well.



And I'm going there too

In Sanlúcar, Spain, we take a path along the river and we have to push our bikes most of the way. We pass close to a pretty little house and the owner comes out to chat. We first talk in Spanish, but he quickly asks us if we speak English, he himself is English. He bought a piece of land 17 years ago and built his own house. The materials arrived by river or by donkey, there is no road.



The English man's house

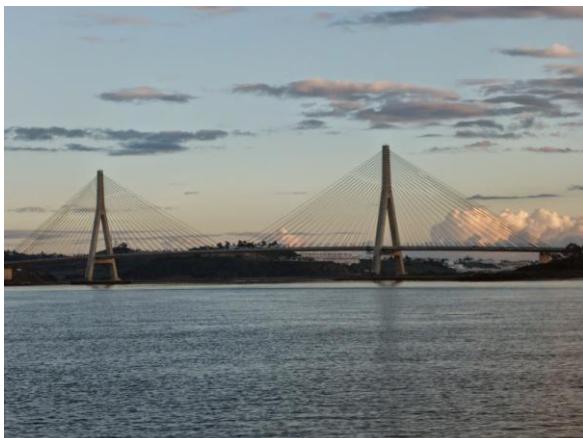
It is idyllic, well maintained, free hens, sheep in a meadow, four cats in the sun and a good friendly dog. They have two children, a 16 year old daughter who is studying in England and a 12 years old boy who goes to school in Sanlúcar, 25 minutes walk using the little path that we have taken or by boat if he a little late.



Nice landscape on the Spanish side

We continue, leaving the bikes, nice view of a small peak and then we come back, recovering the bikes, along the same path. We embark our tender, still loaded with two bikes and two persons, and return in Alcoutim. Jens must use the maximum speed of the electric engine because the current against us is strong. We put everything on Maja, dinghy and bicycles,

lunch and head towards Ayamonte. The current is against us but will soon turn and we will have it with us all the way to Ayamonte. After ten minutes, Jens wants to see something with the binoculars but can't find them. Where are the binoculars? In the backpack, but where's the backpack? We look everywhere and don't find it. Conclusion: we have forgotten it in Sanlúcar, in Spain! We turn around and go back there. We come along an old sailboat that seems abandoned, rusty and full of junk, but when we approach a man shows up and grumbles in German. I apologize, say it is just for a minute, and we'll leave right away (in English). I don't know if he understands but he goes back in his hole. Jens goes and finds the bag which is still on the pontoon while I hold the old German boat, we don't even need to tie up, the current pushes us against it. Jens returns quickly and we leave. Rest of the trip, 16 nm (29 km) in 3 hours without incident.



The bridge upstream of Ayamonte



Ayamonte Marina entrance

The current at the marina entrance in Ayamonte is strong, to the south, so Jens passes the marina on the river and turns back, we have more control against the current and we go like a crab: he points much higher than the entry and the current moves us just where we should go. We take "our" place and just after our arrival it becomes dark. Happy of this trip on the Guadiana, imposing border river where we saw beautiful scenery not damaged by uncontrolled building like on the coast and happy too to come back.

Alcoutim-Ayamonte : 13 nm (23 km)

Florvåg-Ayamonte : $1\ 877 + 13 = 1\ 890$ nm (3 402 km)

Friday, December 5, 2014. Ayamonte

We do the big cleaning today, tomorrow we take Maja out of the water. Jens does the outside and I do the inside. We take time for a good breakfast and to read the newspaper. It's been a long time since Maja has been so clean. Jens also delivers a big bag to the laundry, we wash everything. After lunch, taken outside in the sun, we do a bike tour and return to the mill we had seen on November 13 and, happy coincidence, the girl who is guide is just arriving and opens it for us. She explains how the mill was operating. The miller opened a valve and the tide filled a large pond behind the mill. When the tide went down he opened valves that let water in the mill and that turned the grindstones. Then we continue on a good path through the marsh. I see two storks but I don't have time to take a picture. We return to the boat and stay inside, the night falls quickly and it is cold.



A grindstone in the mill



The marsh. Here, at least, it's flat

Saturday, December 6, 2014 Ayamonte (Spain)-Vila Real de Santo Antonio (Portugal)



Main Square. Ayamonte

6.6 ° this morning, the record, and local people say that it's not normal, it is rarely so cold. We have an appointment at 2 pm in Vila Real de Santo Antonio, in front, in Portugal, to take Maja out of the water. Jens does some shopping, pays the marina fee and we walk a little in the town here in Ayamonte, in the morning. Many people are outside, especially on the square, adults are chatting and children play. The favorite toy, for the moment, is a spinning top, all the kids have one and some are good to rotate them and even take them by the hand without them stopping turning. Lunch in the sun on a terrace, two tapas each and that is enough then we go to Vila Real. The weather is very nice, no wind and the tide is high. Jens is not in shape, it has a very bad toothache. We arrive there at 2 pm and we moor at the dock, we take the bikes on land and after that we are spectators, the staff take charge of Maja.



Maja on her way out of the water



They are three: Lucia, the young woman who speaks English, her husband Claudio and one employee. Lucia holds the rope, Claudio dives to place Maja in the axis of the trailer and the employee drives the tractor. Everything goes well and the tractor starts pulling the trailer with Maja on it. Then the employee washes Maja with a high pressure hose. She is not very dirty, just little green algae. Then he backs again, to put Maja in front of her cradle and advances very slowly. When Maja is in place, they work to put up legs and wedge it all. They work well, take their time and at 5 pm, Maja is in her cradle. The sun has disappeared and it is cold. While Claudio and the employee worked, we were in the office with Lucia to do the paper work and to chat. They started this yard in April this year, it's all new. She asks us if we want to pay by card and Jens says yes. She tells us that often the Portuguese and Spaniards don't want to pay by card and ask her to pay cash ... but without VAT. We heard about other yards that don't pay VAT and where one has to pay in cash. Here, they are honest, everything is declared and they do a good job. And for us, it seems quite cheap. So Maja will stay here until the end of January. We climb on board on Maja. I confess I don't like this very much but Jens swears there is no risk that the boat will tip and I have to believe him. We spend a quiet evening, Jens's tooth is hurting badly and he is not in good shape.



I'm going home

Ayamonte-Vila Real de Santo Antonio : 2 nm (3,6 km)
 Florvåg-Vila Real de Santo Antonio : $1\ 890 + 2 = 1\ 892$ nm (3406 km)

Sunday, December 7, 2014. Vila Real de Santo Antonio

Jens slept well, the pain has subsided around midnight. So we are to live in the boat, but on land. This is more like primitive camping than normal: we can't dispose of waste water and we have no electricity. The only way to drain waste water is in the tank, how to say this in an elegant way, after the toilet, commonly called the shit tank, which contains 90 liters, so we can't use a lot of water. There is shower and toilet on the ground. Electricity is not a problem, the batteries are well charged, but Maja is in the shade and solar panels will not charge much. If we had thought about that earlier we would have asked for a place in the sun, but we didn't think of it. Well, for two days, it's OK. But it's a funny feeling, it is best to forget that we are on the ground. The weather is nice and cold, a little north wind is chilly.



Breakfast inside, on land

We take breakfast inside and we do a bike tour and to our surprise, we arrive at a lovely beach bordering a natural park so no disfigured by buildings and hotels. Many people walk, the light is strong.



The beach. Vila Real

But our street is not very pretty; it's an industrial area half abandoned. A family of gypsies is living in a ruin, a little further, and they look quite poor ... Back at around 11 am, we set to work: we have to repaint Maja, under the waterline. We put on our "kjeledress" (warm coverall) and start. At first, I do not pay enough attention and I get paint in my hair. And it's not just any painting it is "antifouling" full of chemicals products not healthy at all. Jens

cleans my hair with white spirit. We are working non-stop for three hours, kneeling or standing. We have protected the floor with plastic.



Blue, blue

Then we have lunch, we rest a bit and late afternoon, we take a ride into town. We are the only ones living on a boat and we have a key to the building site. When we go out, who is just passing on the sidewalk? Pia, the woman who is sailing alone on her Hannah Brown and whom we had accompanied to cross from Ayamonte to here. She is walking with a couple of friends. What a coincidence. We chat a bit and leave, it's cold and the night will fall soon. In town, the plaza is quite busy, it's a kind of "Natal" (Christmas) market. We buy hot chestnuts, look a little and go home. Last night here, we leave tomorrow to Denmark, a week, then to Norway. So the blog takes a break, we return on January 20 and it will resume on the 21 st..



Christmas market. Vila Real

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

SEE YOU SOON





Our trace from June to Desember 2014
Florvåg-Vila Real de Santo Antonio (Portugal)

