



MAJA'S Voyage

2014-2017

Book 6

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February-May 2017

Roses (Spain)-Santander (Spain)

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

Monday, February 27, 2017. Bergen-Roses

Great premiere for this trip: we travel with an accompanied luggage, a small suitcase, very common anonymous, but weighing a ton! (I exaggerate a bit). Because inside there is a motor for the Maja's bow propeller. The poor suitcase loses its wheels and frame when it arrives on the luggage band at Barcelona airport, but the motor is fine, thank you.



On the left, the little suitcase



Oslo airport

We leave Bergen at 6am (and a lot of thanks to Catherine, my sister who took us to the airport at 4.30am!). We fly to Oslo then Oslo-Barcelona. At Barcelona airport we take the metro and a singer distracts us: he asks several passengers to say a word each and improvises a song with these words. Arriving at the central train station of Barcelona, we go out a little on the big square to be outside a little and are surprised by the luminosity and the heat, 19 °. We then take the train at 3:16 pm to Figueres where we arrive at 5:30 pm and finally a taxi to Roses where we arrive at 6:15 pm. We find Maja in good condition and quickly resume our habits of

"sailors" on land. We want to go shopping, but the nearest supermarket is closed and we don't want to take the bikes down for just one evening. We survive with our "knekkebrød" (dry Wasa bread), dinner on Monday 27, breakfast and lunch on Tuesday 28. Tired we go to bed early. See you tomorrow.



Dinner, breakfast and lunch: knekkebrød

Tuesday, February 28, 2017. Roses-L'Estartit. Catalonia. Spain



Before



After

We found Maja in good condition but the Norwegian flag needs repair, see photo. I do it while Jens tinkers and then, at around 11 am, Maja is put in the water without any problem. We are a little emotional : if everything goes well, it is the last time Maja is put back in the water, our last and long leg of the trip starts today. At 12:30 we leave the Nautic Center Yard in Roses, in calm and gray weather. We had planned to do 6-7 miles and stop at L'Escala, the first port south of Roses, but the weather is so calm and the navigation so pleasant, that we continue to the next port, 6 miles further south, L'Estartit, where we arrive at 3:30 pm. We motor along the coast which is very built first then wild and more deserted.



Maja is put on the water



Calm and grey



Arrival at L'Estartit

The port of L'Estartit is well protected from the north wind and a gust of wind from the north (tramontana) is announced in the late afternoon. Nice harbor, huge marina but very little activity. A marinero welcomes us and, when docked, we savor our first ankerdram of 2017, a clara (beer and lemonade). Short walk, shopping for Jens and multiple and unsuccessful essays for me to send the mails "The blog starts again". I have a lot of problems, I can't find my contacts anymore, the mail doesn't go when I find them etc, etc. Jens makes a good little dinner, it changes us from the knekkebrød. We have to put the heating on, the evening is cool. After dinner, I return to the mails job, manage to send them ... but forgot to put the address. The gust of wind must have passed offshore; it is still calm when we go to bed.

Roses-L'Estartit: 14 nm (25 km)

Florvåg-L'Estartit: 7 049 + 14 = 7 063 nm (12 713 km)

Wednesday, March 1st, 2017. L'Estartit. Spain

We are sleeping very well in the boat, better than at home. The night was cool, 8 °, but when the sun comes out, the temperature raises quickly, 17 ° at noon. Jens resumes his good habit of making us a fruit salad for breakfast. Then we set off on foot to climb L'Estartit's mountain, la Piedra Maura, 130 m above sea level.



La Piedra Maura



We have too much clothes on



View over L'Estartit

It is first a road then a good path that is quite steep. We quickly remove our jackets and we are warm enough just in sweater. Arrived at the top, the view is magnificent on L'Estartit, a very nice little town with a well protected harbor behind the cape. Up there we discuss with two young women and curious coincidence, the youngest one has worked several summers as a guide for Spanish tourists ... in Norway. She knows Bergen, Oslo, the Lofoten Islands, the north, the glaciers. We notice that she has picked some kinds of stems and we ask her what it is. These are wild asparagus. She shows us the plant and explains what to look for, the young shoots. Then they leave. As we go down we take a wider path and look for asparagus and find some, not much but enough to make a small, small appetizer for lunch.



Our wild asparagus

Lunch on the boat, outside but with a blanket on the legs, newspaper, El Pais for me and El Mundo for Jens. After lunch, I walk on the pontoons to look for "blues" and find several ones. Then I resume sending the mail "The blog starts again". Jens helps me and this time it gets better, then I write the blog. At around 8 pm, we want to celebrate our return to Spain and go to the restaurant, good, friendly and well heated. We are near the heating and we are almost too hot, but it seems good, the night is cool. We leave tomorrow.



Maja. L'Estartit

Thursday, March 2, 2017. L'Estartit-Blanes.



Relaxed navigation

The night was a little bit cold, 8°, and Jens put on the heating when we get up. We leave at 8:30 am from L'Estartit, a nice small town. The weather is beautiful, calm and at first, we have engine and jib then the wind drops and Jens rolls the jib. We see the snowy Pyrenees in the distance, it's beautiful.



Relax sailing, we follow along the coast some places wild and some places heavily built. We change our "dyner", the summer duvets for thicker ones; we have been cold last night. We pass near uninhabited small islands called "Las Hormigas" (The Ants).



Islands "Las Hormigas"

We have many possibilities to stop, the marinas are numerous and close together. We try to choose a marina in a real harbor, not just a touristy marina. L'Estartit was a real town with a real harbor. And today we stop at Blanes, a fairly large city with an active fishing harbor. We arrive there at 3 pm. The harbor is protected by a dike which is actually a double high wall of concrete, and it looks new. And the docks and pontoons inside the harbor look new too. A marinero shows us our place and tells us that it is the best place of the port. Maja is along a high quay, made for boats bigger than her and we see only the top of her doghouse.



The quay is high, we don't see much of Maja

And the marinero also tells us that yesterday he had given the same place to two young Norwegians who left this morning. We walk along the beautiful promenade, the beach is nice and very long, and it reminds me of La Baule, in France.



The long beach



Good “harvest” today



La Palomera

From the "peñon" (as in Almuñecar), a rock where you can climb but which is called here La Palomera, the view over the bay is beautiful. Jens goes shopping, I do the bog and we dine quietly on the boat. We leave tomorrow for Barcelona, the weather is good until tomorrow night, but then there will be very strong winds.

L'Estartit-Blanes: 33 nm (59 km)

Florvåg-Blanes: $7\,063 + 33 = 7\,096$ nm (12 772 km)

Friday, March 3, 2017. Blanes-Barcelona

It is gray and misty, with little wind. We leave Blanes at 8.15 am, motoring and continue south-west towards Barcelona.



Grey and misty

It is quite quiet and Jens takes the opportunity to wash the floor in the cockpit.



Jens washes the floor in the cockpit ... and fixes the depth-sounder (he sees better in the dark)

Soon we observe that we are approaching a big city: many high buildings (which are not hotels), frequent trains, power station and heavy traffic. We pass the Olympic Marina, built for the 1992 Games, but we don't stop there, we want to go closer to downtown. At 2 pm, we hear a weather forecast which announces bad weather (F 7-8 with gusts at 9!) for tonight. Luckily, we are almost there.



We are going to turn right after the big green mark and enter Barcelona Harbor

We enter the immense port of Barcelona where there are two marinas, the royal club and the Port Vell. We go to Port Vell and a mariner shows us our place, among the super-yachts! Maja looks very small beside them, but it is a good place, in a small well protected basin.



Super-yachts and little Maja

Ankerdram then a short walk along the harbor. It is cool but many people are walking, warmly dressed. Blog, dinner at the boat and reading. I started "The Black House" on my Kindle and I want to know what is going to happen. When we go to bed, the wind is increasing but remains reasonable.

Distance Blanes-Barcelona: 36 nm (65 km)

Florvåg-Barcelona: $7\ 096 + 36 = 7\ 132$ nm (12 837 km)



Saturday, March 4, 2017. Barcelona

We slept well until 3am and then we are awakened by the noise of the wind and Maja's movements. Even in our super-protected place, the wind is violent and the sea rough. The wind comes right from behind us and sometimes pushes us against the dock and sometimes takes us away from it. Maja knocks against the dock or moves away from it, so Jens puts an extra line and I put on all our fenders. The movement is important but not violent; we have known much worse (Icaria, Kythera, Samothrace and Kaş, for example). This gale does not last very long, around 6 pm, it calms down a little. It is raining very hard, we are wet and I have difficulty to warm up afterwards but we go back to sleep around 6 pm. This morning, it is gray and cold and Jens realizes that the cable between land and Maja has broken off and fell into the water, so there is no electricity coming from the dock but we have our reserves produced by the solar panels. He warns the marina office and a marinero comes to reconnect the cable. Both of us take a shower, the bathroom is heated, what a luxury. Then we go for a walk and go shopping. The streets are deserted, it is quite early and the weather is grey.



Barceloneta market

We go to the market of our neighborhood, Barceloneta, well stocked market and buy everything needed to prepare leeks rolled in ham and a chocolate mousse, we have guests for lunch: Raquel, her husband Pepe and Mapufe, their 12 years old daughter. Jens knew Raquel when she worked 3 months at the University of Bergen in ... 1991.



Mapufe and Raquel



Raquel and Pepe

We visited them twice, first in November 2013 when we drove from Almuñecar back home via Barcelona and this summer when we took a flight Malta-Barcelona-Bergen. They received us nicely both times and now it is our turn to receive them on Maja.



Mapufe is reading “Tintin i Tibet” in English

While the leeks are cooking, I walk on the pontoons to look for “blue” (2) and come back to finish preparing the meal. The sun has come out and the weather is fine now. Our guests arrive at 2 pm and we can eat outside. Good company, good meal, we spend a good time together and they orient us on the situation in Catalonia and Spain. They leave in the late afternoon and Jens and I go for a walk. Now there is a crowd walking, the promenade is black with people, walkers, joggers, cyclists, children roller-skating or on tricycles.



A lot of people

There are even a lot of people on the beach and yet the wind is cold. We go home, wash the dishes and have a quiet evening. The dinner tonight is a cup of tea with two toasts, that's enough.

Sunday, March 5, 2017. Barcelona

Today it's sunny and quite calm, just a slight breeze. We stay in Barcelona until Wednesday; it's going to blow tomorrow and Tuesday. Jens takes the bikes out, it's time to get back again on two wheels. We ride along the beach and notice groups of costumed people gathering in a square. I think they are going to parade, it must be carnival.



Carnival?

Some costumes are funny, some look like uniforms and some, from South America, are very beautiful. The group that takes itself least seriously is called "Les Majorettes" in blue and white. The average age must be at least 75 years, men and women with blond wigs and not walking very fast. We ride, ride, pass the Olympic marina, stop to reconstitute ourselves with a clara and "patatas bravas" and start our way back.



A Viksund! Built on Askøy!

I stop at the Olympic Marina to look for "blues" and find a few ones. We did 15 km in all, not bad for the first biking day of the year. Lunch on the boat and reading of two newspapers, La Vanguardia and El Periódico. El País and El Mundo don't appear on Sundays. And what do we see in La Vanguardia? The presentation of a rally of old cars between Barcelona and Sitges and a picture of the Zapp family who traveled around the world with a 1928 car. We met them the first time in Kaş, Turkey, and they visited us in Norway this summer.



The Zapp family is on the newspaper

We will try to contact them tomorrow. Jens works, checks the gas, and then changes the engine of the bow propeller. He tests it and it seems to work well. I do the blog and then we dine of the rest of the leeks rolled in ham. And then, good evening reading with a little heating on, the evening is fresh.



Jens changes the bow-propeller motor

Monday, March 6, 2017. Barcelona

Very nice and warm. We do a laundry and the linen dries in two hours on the boat. A racing sailboat arrived late last night, and is behind us. It has an English name "Teamwork" but also a small French flag stuck near the name. I say hello to them in French and yes, the two young guys are French-speaking, one is French and the other Swiss.



Team Work

They arrive directly from Lisbon, without stop and it took them seven days. They invite us to visit their boat which is a fast boat but not very comfortable. Bunks of canvas are hung along the hull inside and that's about all the layout to live on. You can't stand up, no kitchen, no toilet, just a bucket and apparently it makes a terrible noise when sailing, squeaking, knocking in the waves ... It is a sporty boat for young people, and we are glad to come back to our good Maja. I then go by bike to find "blues" at the other marina, El Club Real but all the pontoons are inaccessible, everything is closed, you need a code. I go then to buy a new Spanish courtesy flag, the old one is torn.



The old one



The new one

Lunch at the boat then we go, biking, in recognition to find the dentist indicated by Raquel, Jens has an appointment tomorrow, he lost a piece of a tooth. We ride downtown, dense traffic on the street and the sidewalks are full of people. We finally find the address and we sit at a terrace on the Paseo Gracia to take an orange juice, the weather is nice and even the wind is not cold. We are early March, a weekdays and the tourists are many, it must be crazy in summer. We go back to the boat and Jens sends an email to Candé Zapp. Quiet evening, without heating.



A lot of people

Tuesday, March 7, 2017. Barcelona

Jens goes to the dentist at 9:30 am. Fortunately he leaves early, he gets a little lost but arrives at 9:28 am. A nice dentist who does the right thing. Me, during this time, I send two postcards and send the Club Nautico de L'Estartit's electronic key that we have forgotten to give back when we left. Jens comes back and we go for a walk through the old streets of Barcelona. It's beautiful and the weather is very nice.



Plaza Real

Lunch on the boat and just after Candelaria Zapp and her son Tehue arrive and shortly after Herman, Paloma and Wallaby. Pampa, their eldest son doesn't come. What a coincidence that we meet again here. They tell us about their journey, it has been 14 years that they travel around the world with their old car, a 1928 model. Sunday they made the rally Barcelona-Sitges and won it! It must be said that all the others made a stop in the middle of the rally and that they did not know and did not stop. They were very surprised to be so applauded on arrival. We drink a tea together, the children read comics and then we go for a walk on the pontoons. We part wondering where and when we'll meet again ...



Cande and Rehue



Herman and Cande



Reading salon



Jens, Jeannette, Herman and Cande

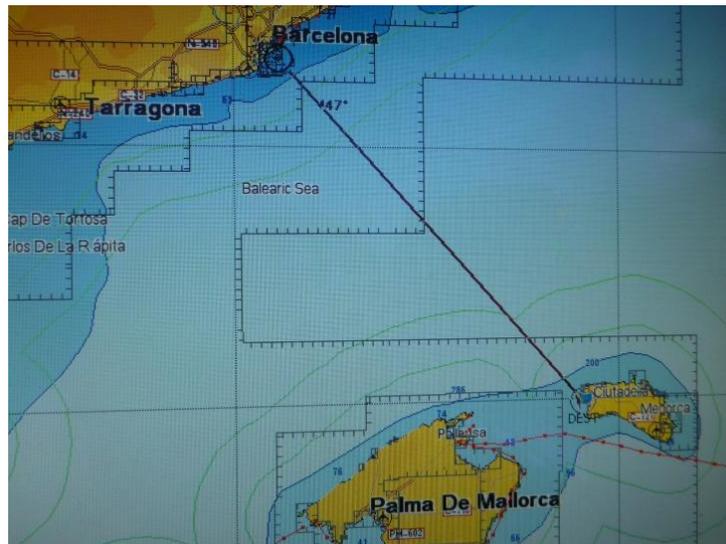
Good luck to them for the rest of their journey. As it is our last night here, we go out to eat tapas and take a beer. We pass in front of a small restaurant full and noisy and we go in. We are lucky to have a small table, right after us a queue of guests waiting for a table forms on the sidewalk. Very good tapas, and a surprising atmosphere for us, northerners. Everyone speaks loudly and all the time, the noise is deafening but also funny. They are mostly young people, I think we are the oldest. The young couple next to us notices that we were looking at a dish they ordered and offered us to taste it. That's nice. Then back to Maja, last checking of the weather forecast (good) and in bed. We leave tomorrow for Menorca.

Wednesday, March 8, 2017. Barcelona-Ciudadela (Minorca)

Hurray for women!

We take a shower, do some shopping and then want to fill up the diesel tank before leaving. And there we wait, wait. Jens calls on the radio, yes, they're coming in 15 minutes. The 15 min pass, still nobody. But time goes by because we are talking with a Norwegian, owner of a

large 25-meter sailboat "Oleana". Finally, two marineros arrive and Jens fills up the tank. We leave Port Vell at 10:30 am, fine weather, west wind F2-3.



Way point: Minorca



It's a piece of cake

We are sailing slowly, but we have time, the weather forecast is good for today and tomorrow. We see several ships waiting to enter the harbor. The wind increases a bit, the sea is flat and Maja is moving forward. I took a pill against seasickness and feel a little sleepy. I lie down and sleep 3 hours! We eat lunch and as a dessert take an ice cream. We had bought ice cream for the kids yesterday but they did not want it, so instead of throwing it away, we take advantage of it. The wind drops and we have to start the engine. We notice a sailboat which follows the same line as we do, we advance parallel. With AIS, we see her name "Bel Ami", and we travel all night together, sometimes she goes faster, sometimes she goes slower. A "Mayday-Mayday" (distress notice) is sent by radio Tarragona. They received a distress signal from a boat called "Corbal" and lost touch. The radio calls Corbal many times, unanswered. We do not know what happened next. Our dinner tonight is raviolis in tomato sauce and soon after we start our watches. We continue, little wind, very calm sea, beautiful moonlight.



Sunset



We are progressing in the dark

We change every two hours and it works ok. I don't sleep very well, but I slept a lot during the day. But time passes quickly. And there, many thanks to Laila: she has recorded radio broadcasts on our phones and it is a very nice way to spend our night shifts. At 5 am, still little wind but cross waves coming from all sides, a confused sea, the waves are not high but enough to make Maja roll. But it is okay. We are approaching Minorca, "Bel Ami" enters the harbor before us. The island is in the mist for a long time and then appears in the sun. It is bordered by cliffs, no beaches on this side, caves, rocks. But above these cliffs, one sees fields. The port of Ciudadela is located in a cala, a kind of fjord and we have to enter between the lighthouse and the tower San Nicolás and motor up this fjord. A long pontoon for visitors is almost empty, while the guide speaks of a crowd of boats in the summer. We go there, have a good breakfast which serves as ankerdram and here we are after another good crossing. We left Wednesday at 10:30 am and arrived on Thursday at 10 am, it took us 23 hours and 30 minutes.



Cliffs. Minorca



Arriving in the Ciudadela Cala



Safely arrived

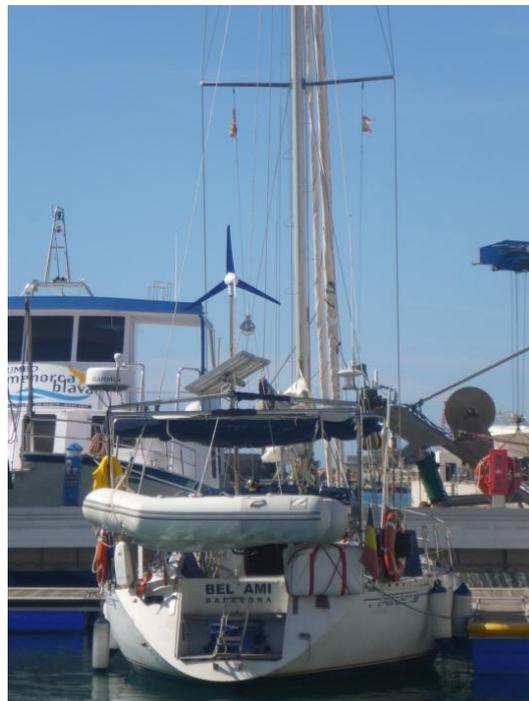
Barcelona-Ciudadela (Minorca): 112 nm (201 km)
Florvåg-Ciudadela: $7\ 132 + 112 = 7\ 244$ nm (13 039 km)

Thursday 9 March 2017. Ciadadela. Minorca



Place d'Armes. Ciadadela

After breakfast, as we are a little tired, we go for a very small walk in town, a pretty old military town with wide streets and big squares, then we'll see if we can find our companion of crossing, Bel Ami in the other marina.



Bel Ami

We find her, the boat is open but we don't see anyone. Then Jens knocks and the guy comes out. We tell him that we traveled with him all night. "Ah! Maja! ". We talk a little, he is Spanish but has registered his boat in Belgium. This is not the first time we have encountered

this kind of situation. The rules in Spain for having a boat are so complicated and so difficult that some owners register their boat in another European country.



The long harbor

We also look at this marina which is more inland in the harbor to decide if we move or stay at our long pontoon. But it is calmer and prettier where we are, so we stay there. Lunch then siesta for me, I didn't have enough hours of sleep last night at sea. Jens then takes the bikes out and we ride to see the lighthouse and the coast nearby.



An antic building which is a garage

It is splendid weather, hot and sunny, about 20°. And even with such a short ride, I find already many flowers. I return to Maja and catch up on the blog of Tuesday and Wednesday, plus the night from Wednesday to Thursday, I finish after dinner. Meanwhile Jens is going to take his yellow anorak (his old yellow anorak!) to a seamstress to change the zipper. He had asked if there was a seamstress who could do this at the tourist office, and the young woman had told him of that lady. We bought the zipper in a tiny haberdashery in Barcelona that had

everything. Dinner and dishwashing. We put on the small electric heater that is under the table. The table becomes warm and so can serve as a dish-dryer. In bed early, we are tired.

Friday, 10 March 2017. Ciudadella. Minorca

Breakfast in the sun outside on Maja. We then see our friend Bel Ami pass, they go to Mahón, the capital of Menorca, on the other side of the island. Then we leave at 11.30 am for a loooong bike ride, first on a good road with little traffic.



Good road

The only problem is the wind, strong enough and against us. We go to a cala, north of Ciudadella, Cala Morell. Jens looked on the map and this cala looks well protected and a few houses at the bottom make him believe that there is a small village ... We roll and turn off towards Cala Morell. A sign indicates ancient tombs and we see one, a cave supported by two pillars and dating back to 1500 BC.



Antic tomb

Then the road descends steeply and we arrive at the "small village" which is actually composed only of holiday homes and is absolutely deserted. The bay is pretty, the sea is calm while outside there are waves.



The beach and holidays cottages. Cala Morell



The “path”



The “path”

We eat our dried fruits and drink water and begin our return, this time by a small path that runs along the sea. And what a path! Not at all for cyclists. We walk, pulling or pushing our bikes. The landscape is beautiful, a plateau where we are, steep cliffs and blue sea below. We don't meet people, only a few sheep.



Round buildings

We make about 3 km like that then catch a road, very stony also but at least with smaller pebbles and finally the real road. And the last kilometers are a real pleasure, it is flat and we have the wind in the back.



Reward

Return to Ciudadela and, after the effort the reward, we eat a late lunch, it is 3:30 pm, at a restaurant. We made 22 km and were in the sun and wind for four hours. Rest of the afternoon at the boat, blog, small walk to see the sunset, dinner of a cup of tea, reading and to bed.

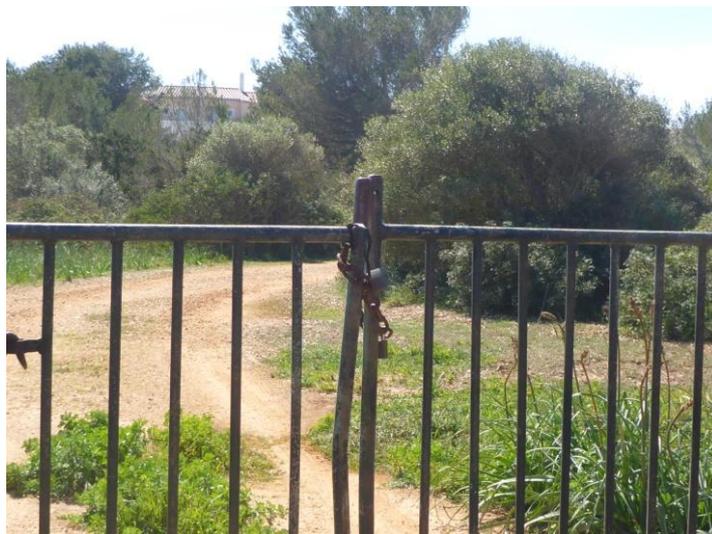
Saturday 11 March 2017. Ciudadela. Minorca

The weather is still beautiful. I ride downtown to the tourist office to ask for a bus timetables, we think of going by bus to Mahón, the capital, one of these days. But it's closed. I ask where is the bus station and a lady explains me, first right, then straight ahead ... the bus station is near the cemetery. I find the cemetery, look for the bus station but can't find it. Well, it will be for another time. I ride back, I made at least 4-5 km and we both ride to Cap d'Artrutx, south of Ciudadela. I'll put a map tomorrow of our bike rides. Good road first, then small road and finally a private road, well marked "Privado" "Prohibido" and big sign of No Entry.



Hum, hum, we don't understand

But on the paper map and on Google map, it is marked as public. So we go, I'm not very happy about it but I follow Jens. I hope there won't be a dog. Long good path, straight and we arrive at a farm and there a dog begins to bark. Luckily it looks old and not too aggressive. A gate closes the way, but it is not locked. We continue and arrive at another gate this time well padlocked.



The second gate is well padlocked



It's high



Jens passes me the bikes and jumps elegantly

We have to climb a wall and pass the bikes over the fence. As soon as said, as soon as done but I admit that Jens has to help me get down from my high position. Him, he jumps elegantly, the young old man. We came back on a road that takes us to a marina surrounded by holiday homes. Only small boats can come in, the entrance channel passes under a low bridge.



As it is Saturday, a cafe is open and we take a clara and a tostada (toasted bread, olive oil and crushed tomato).



Artrutx lighthouse

We then follow the coast to the lighthouse of Cap d'Artrutx, by a wide deserted street lined with holiday homes and, who knows why, it's a one way street, and we take it the wrong way. This street stops at the lighthouse and then we take a small stony path like yesterday.



Not much vegetation

In fact it is the same path that follows the western coast of Minorca. A sign warns to cover one's head, take a lot of water and avoid the hottest hours. But this is for the summer. This same panel says that in the spring you can see orchids. For me it is the carrot that makes me

go. The path is of the same kind as yesterday and much longer. We make 5 km by pushing, carrying and pulling our bikes. But I find one orchid as a reward for my efforts. Return to Maja at 4:40 pm. We made 27 km, 2 of which in infraction on a private road and 5 on a stony path in the middle of the desert, all this in 5 hours.



The one orchid I saw

Sunday, March 12, 2017. Ciudadela. Minorca

Sunny but with a strong northerly wind that greatly refreshes the temperature. Today we go by bike on a real road, no stony path. We go north of Ciudadela (Ciudadella in Catalan), to Cape Nati.



Walls and round buildings

Soon after leaving the town, we see already kilometers of walls separating the fields which are fairly green at this season and those round buildings whose roof is formed like a staircase. The closer we get to the sea, the more the soil becomes arid and stony. But even there, walls and round buildings as far as you can see. It is difficult to give the scale by photos, but it is immense.



Nati lighthouse



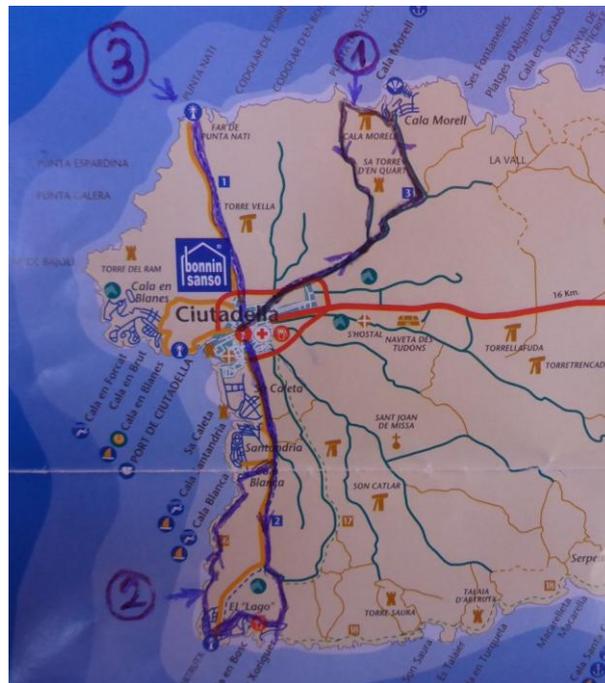
Military building?

We arrive at the lighthouse of Nati by a road all straight at the end. Two buildings, also round, appear built by the military, with openings towards the sea where, I think, there were cannons. We find a place protected from the wind to eat an orange and ride back. Small ride of 14 km, a piece of cake. Lunch on the boat, outside but well wrapped and then we make Maja swing so we'll be sheltered from the wind in the cockpit.



We make Maja swing

After lunch, sewing work for me: now that Jens' yellow anorak got a new zipper, I continue the restoration work of this antiquity, I border the sleeves, well frayed, by blanket stitches. I do this while I transfer 11,000 photos from the computer to a memory stick, and it takes time.



Our rides:

1. Cala Morell
2. Cape d'Artrutx
3. Cape Nati

Monday, March 13, 2017. Ciutadela

Light consolation for the people of the north: it is gray and the wind is cold, we even have a few drops of rain but it doesn't last, the sun appears at times. We return to the tourist office to ask some questions to the lady: what are these round stone constructions that we see everywhere? She tells us that they are built for three reasons: first, to remove the stones from the fields. Secondly to make a shelter for the animals, there is no tree on this part of the island, northwest. And finally, the men used to climb on them (hence the edge "in staircase")

to hunt. We ride then to see pre-historic buildings, just outside the city. Back to Maja and quiet afternoon. I class my photos, make a blog entry just for the flowers, update my "blues" and make the blog, plus a little sewing. It is still windy and gray.



Very old building

Tuesday, March 14, 2017. Ciudadela



Jens puts the bikes in the bus

We take the bus at 8:45 am for Mahón (Maó in Catalan and it reminds me of Kian, our 2 1/2 year old grandson who calls all the cats "maou"), the capital of the island, 46 km east. The project is to return by bike. 46 km ... hum, hum. We arrive there an hour later, after passing through Ferreries, Es Mercadal and Alaior, three small towns on the way. We descend to the port in Mahón, and it is really a descent. The city is perched on a cliff and dominates the cala, which is very big and where the harbor is all in length. I look for "blues", finds four, and we also see "Bel Ami", the sailboat that had sailed parallel to us from Barcelona to Minorca. We go back into town and have a second breakfast.



Mahon



The harbor

We go to the tourist information office where a lady, not very nicely, tells us that we should learn to read a map. All this because Jens asked her if a dotted path was passable in bicycles. We do light tourism in Mahón, which we find much less beautiful than Ciudadela and at noon we begin our return. The old road is practically parallel to the fast road, so we take it, it's nice and there is very little traffic. We can even change without spectators.



We change, we are too hot



Good road and little traffic



Picnic

We ride well and stop for a picnic of a banana and an orange at the height of Alaior. We continue and in Es Mercadal we take the fast road for 8 km. It goes up well, a lane is reserved for slow vehicles and we are still much slower.



The tunnel

We pass under a tunnel but it is short, it's ok. And at Ferreries we discuss. Jens wants to try a small path (the famous dotted lines on the map) and I look with envy at the beautiful fast road, which one sees going straight there. I let me be convinced, he tells me that there will surely be many more flowers on the path ... Ok, we'll take it. First it is a good little road for 5 km, everything is fine. Then we come to a parking lot and a narrower path descends towards a canyon. A sign "no entry" is for cars, bicycles can pass. The road becomes stony but we manage to half ride and half walk. This valley, enclosed between high cliffs, is fresh, shaded and a stream runs in the bottom.



The bikes can pass



Deep valley



This path seems to stop at a little bridge, further on

We arrive at a bridge over the creek and apparently the path stops there. Three people who walk their dogs tell us that the path stops here, we have to go back.



We go back here

And back means 700 m to the parking lot plus 5 km to Ferreries where we can take the fast road. Jens looks at Google map but can't find the path. We go back and return to the car park with the no entry sign (700 m). The three people leave by car, but another car arrives and Jens asks the driver if really we can't continue after the small bridge. But yes, says the man, the path continues after the bridge. We go back there and find it. Initially, it is primitive but improves rapidly. The three persons knew nothing about it and we foolishly believed them. In fact, it is a beautiful stone path and the ancients would not have made such a beautiful path to end nowhere.



The path continues after the bridge ...

but it's nor easy

That said, it is not easy with the bikes, but we pass. This path is long, maybe two kilometers, and our average speed falls. Then return on a practicable road and arrival in Ciudadela. We left at noon, it is 6:45 pm when we arrive and we made 55 km. We're happy, and not too tired. And Jens was right, I found several new flowers on the path.



Back in Ciudadela

Wednesday, March,15, 2017. Ciudadela

A calm day today, we exercised for two days, at least, yesterday. We go to the market, we walk in the small streets and to recover from this effort, we take a clara on a terrace. Lunch on Maja and last bike ride along the coast north of Ciudadela, but not far and no stony path today. We arrive at a new empty neighborhood, but which must be full in the summer. A small path descends to a nice cala.



The cala

And then, back to the boat, long blog for yesterday and, since it is late and it is our last night we go to the restaurant. Very good and cheap, but I don't get quite what I thought I had ordered. There was "gallo" on the menu. I take it, thinking it was a cock. But when my plate arrives, I am surprised to see a piece of lemon with it. And for good reason, the gallo is a fish. Well, it was good. Late return to the boat, last night photos of Ciudadela. We liked it here, nice people, pretty town, bike friendly, with only one minus, practically no beach. We leave tomorrow for Fermentera, about 150 nautical miles, so thirty hours more or less.



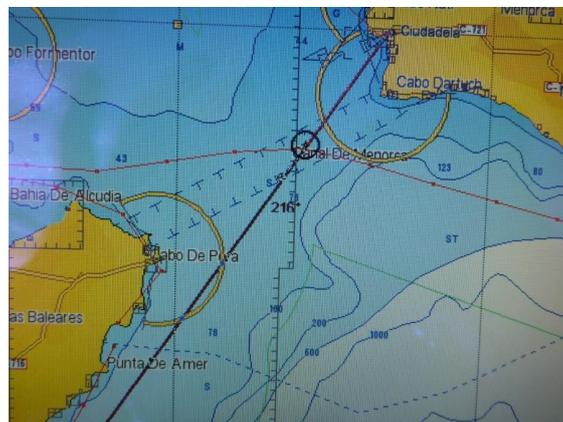
Ciudadela by night

LAS DOMINACIONES DE MENORCA		
EPOCA – FECHAS	GENTES	PROCEDEN
3000 años aJ	Argáricos	Península Ibérica
2000 / 1500 id	Talayóticos	Mediterráneo Orienta
1500 / 600 id	Fenicios	Asia Occidental (Asir
600 /260 id	Griegos	Sureste de Europa
año 250 id	Cartagineses	Norte de Africa
J-C 123 id/427 d n E	Romanos	Península Itálica
427 / 534 id	Vándalos	Centro de Europa
534 / -800 id	Bizantinos	Turquia actual
-800 / 900 id	Normandos	Norte de Francia
902 / 1287 id	Islamitas	Norte de Africa
17 – 1 – 1287	Ibéricos	Cataluny – Aragón
del 19-9-1708 al 18-4-1756	Ingleses	Islas Britanicas
del 18-4-1756 al 4-6-1763	Franceses	Reino de Francia
del 4-6-1763 al 4-2-1782	Ingleses	Islas Britanicas
del 4-2-1782 al 10-11-1798	Españoles	Reino de España
del 10-11-1798 al 14-6-1802	Ingleses	Islas Britanicas
14-6-1802	Devolución definitiva a España	

Minorca history

Thursday 16 and Friday 17 of March, 2017. Ciudadela-Formentera

Nice weather, quiet, no wind, no waves but a small swell. We leave Ciudadela at 8.20 am thinking that we would like to come back one day. Everything is calm, Maja rolls a bit and we have to motor. At 10:15 am, we see on the screen that we are crossing our track of our journey East: on May 17, in 2015, we left from Alcudia (Majorca) directly to Carlo Forte (Sicily).



We cross our trace from May 17, 2015



Dolphins

We continue southwest. Good lunch, tea and, nice surprise, we have the visit of two dolphins who are playing just in front of Maja. And while we admire them, a suspicious noise in the propeller. Jens runs fast inside to put the motor in neutral. And as we bend over, we see a black plastic on the rudder and around the propeller. Jens tries to remove it with the boat hook and succeeds. He tries then to engage gear and it works. Phew! I take a nap and when I wake up, I call Jens downstairs and ask him how to close the living room in case of waves coming into the cockpit. And at that moment another sinister noise in the propeller, louder than the first time. Jens goes upstairs and puts again the motor in neutral. This time it is a white, larger plastic that is caught in the propeller. Jens tries again to take it up with the boat hook but it floats away.



First a black plastic ...



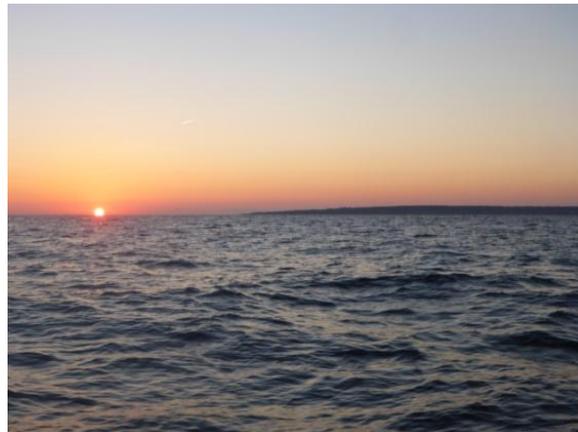
then a white plastic

It is a piece of a very strong bag used to carry sand, cement etc. But, luckily, it's a stiff plastic and it couldn't be wrapped around the propeller, it must have been just a little hooked.

Unfortunately, we don't have time to pick it up and it goes away. Twice in a few hours, that's a lot. Fortunately, it ended well both times. Then it's Jens' turn to take a nap. Maja is progressing well, there must be a favorable current.



Dinner



Sunset and Cape Salina

We dine of lentils and peas and at 7 pm we start our watches. I just have time to take a picture of sunset as we pass the southern tip of Majorca, Cape Salina. We pass to the east of Cabrera Island which we visited in May 2015. The night goes well, I spend time listening to music or radio programs recorded by Laila. Jens him, is thinking.



Little wind during the night

Around 5 am the waves are increasing, they are old waves coming from far, from the south-east, so on our side and no wind to stabilize. Maja is rolling, you have to stall everything and not fill the cups up to the edge at breakfast. But it is okay.



The camera is placed on the window edge

We see Ibiza on our right and we have to pass a channel between Ibiza and Formentera, on the map it seems rather complicated but in fact it is well marked and wide. We have to go between a yellow and black mark and a lighthouse.



We must pass between this yellow mark and this lighthouse

But we don't go fast, we have a current against us and the pilot makes us do large zigzags. The waves are quite large, 1m-1m50, but once passed the channel, it becomes quite calm, we are sheltered by Formentera. A small island before Formentera, Isla Espalmador, is renowned for a beautiful bay where, in summer, there are moorings available to boaters. As we pass by, we go to see it. But no moorings and some waves, it is not so attractive today. We go to the marina in the only port of Formentera, Puerto de Sabina (Port of Savina in Catalan). A mariner welcomes us and puts us, luckily, along a pontoon. It is 1:20 pm, we used exactly 29 hours and made 149 nautical miles. Well deserved lunch and short recognition of Formentera by bike. We go to the village of San Francisco Xavier (Sant Francesc Xavier in Catalan), at 3 km. Dinner and in bed early.



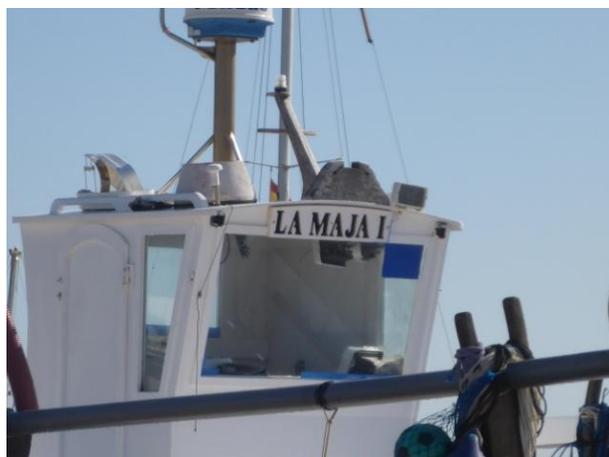
We arrive in Puerto de Sabina

Ciudadela-Formentera: 149 nm (268 km)

Florvåg-Formentera: $7\,244 + 149 = 7\,393$ nm (13 307 km)

Saturday, March 18, 2017. Puerto de Sabina. Formentera

I went to bed early and wake up at 8:30 am, after a good night sleep. Jens is already dressed and has gone to buy bread. It is mild, and the night was not as cold as in Minorca. We hear and see incredible ferry traffic. Two fast ferries arrive from Ibiza at 9:30 am and one leaves at the same time. At 10 am, a big ferry arrives. And it goes like that all day long. And we see people coming arriving and leaving. In summer, the marina is always full and the marineros are busy saying "Sorry, there is no more place". I go to look for "blues", find only one, but as a consolation, I see a small fishing boat called "La Maja I".



A cousin



Riding

We go by bike, we are not here to be lazy, to go at the southern tip of the island, to Cape de Barbaria. We take small roads, but they are very well marked with special signs for bikes. We ride, ride ... and come to the waste dump of the island, closed by a large gate.



Wrong way



Branches are supported by sticks

A man tells us that we are not the first ones to arrive here. At a swing, a sign says to go straight but you can interpret it as continuing on the same road, when in fact you have to go straight on a small road and not follow the swing, OK. We turn back and find the small road. It's pretty flat and a little detour is not a big problem. The countryside is beautiful, but the majority of fields are abandoned. Formentera was known for its wheat production, but we don't see much of it now.



We shall go to the lighthouse over there



The hole

Around the lighthouse, here also it is a little lunar and in the moor there is a large hole, natural I believe. Dried fruits and water and return by the main road, all direct and fast. We used almost twice as much time going (stops for flowers, stops for reading the map, very small roads) that by returning by the straight and flat road, here we are making good speed. Back to Maja at 3 pm, with our share of sun and wind. I start the long blog of the crossing Menorca-Formentera, but at around 5 pm I take a break and we go by bike to the salt marches, which are no longer exploited. Small barriers protect the dunes and the track is wide and flat. It's strange that it is allowed to cars and in summer there can be many of them, but there is a kind of toll and maybe they restrict access to them. Back to Maja and Jens cooks us a good dish of chicken and vegetables in the oven. I finish the blog at 8:30 pm and we have dinner and a nice evening.



Salt marshes



Small barriers protect the dunes



A pretty lizard

Sunday, March 19, 2017. Puerto de Salina. Formentera



In the wood



Sant Ferrant village

We leave at 10:30 am, by bike of course, towards east. We do not go to the lighthouse on this side, La Mola lighthouse, it's too far away but we'll go as long as we can. Small roads all flat along the salt marshes, then in the countryside and even in a forest. We pass the village of

Sant Ferrant, a village all along the road. We take a small road parallel to the main road then this fast road at the end. We go as far as Es Calo, a small bay where fishermen pulled their boats under shelters, a little like “naust” in Norway.



Es Calo

We thought we would find a village, but nothing, only white buildings for holidaymakers and restaurants, all closed at this season. Dried fruits and water then back by the main road, and there we beat all our records, 22 km/hour in average. Jens says that I pedal like a crazy on our way back. We do some shopping at an open supermarket in Sant Ferran. Lunch at the boat then Jens makes me a photo album for my flowers. It is on our page, on the left of Maja's picture where there are already the blues and Sifnos photos. I work well, then blog, cold chicken and salad for dinner, it's very good and in bed. We leave tomorrow for Cartagena, back on continental Spain.

Monday, March 20 and Tuesday March 21, 2017. Puerto de Salina (Formentera)-Cartagena (Spain)

We leave at 9:15 am in a very calm and lightly misty weather. We pass the Cap de Barbaria where we went by bike on Saturday. We are motoring only, there is no wind at all.



Pretty and good

At half-past twelve, Jens prepares us a king's lunch, which we enjoy in the sun. We take a nap each and progress straight ahead. Formentera disappears and we are all alone.

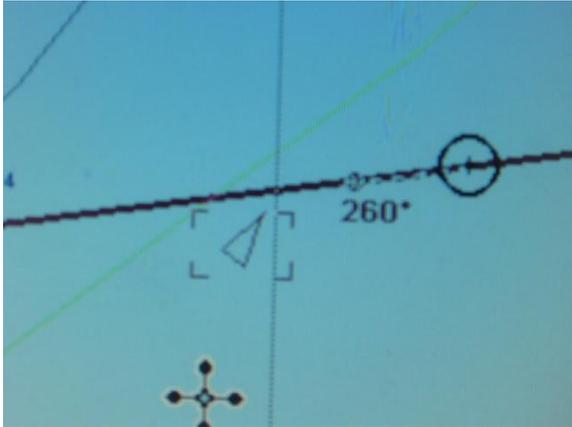


Beautiful sky



Wind and waves against us

At the end of the evening, the wind rises but right in the nose. So Jens changes course a little bit to get the wind more on the side. We go more west, less south and as a good scientist, he takes landmarks with the GPS and calculates whether one wins or one loses by doing this. Apparently, we win a little bit, we make a little more distance but we gain a bit in speed. We dine, white beans, this time and flan as dessert. At 7 pm, a ship is crossing our path, it is our first meeting today. We see her on the screen first then in real, just when the sun goes down. At night, our speed drops, we have everything against us. The wind, weak but still against, the waves that are bigger now and the current.



A ship is going to cross before us



Here it is

At times the speed drops to 3.5 knots (6 km / h) ... and we still have a long way to go. Maja moves, this time back and forth, she goes up and down, and this slows her.



Two ships are overtaking us

We change every two hours as usual but during my shift from 3 am to 5 pm I wake up Jens. Two ships will overtake us and will pass close by. The first passes and the second "Langeland" calls us on the radio to ask if it is OK that she passes half a mile (900 m) from us. Jens answers that there is no problem and he passes. Jens goes back to bed and I let him sleep until 6 am. During my watch, the wind turns and it is no longer worth going so much west. I change direction to go directly to Cartagena. We see a lot more ships now because we are approaching a large port, Cartagena. I did not sleep at all during my two first rest periods but slept well after 6 am. We pass the Cape de Palos with its big lighthouse and see the concrete wall all along La Mar Menor. After this cape, the coast is wild and un-built. The wind is weak but a swell arrives from a distance, from the south-east.



Cabo de Palos

We pass close to a fish farm, well marked by large yellow buoys but immediately after, we pass very close to small yellow buoys that we see only at the last moment. To be sure that we don't risk taking a rope in the propeller, I put to the motor in neutral and Jens looks carefully in the water.



Harbour entrance Cartagena. Red mark and green mark

We arrive in Cartagena at 4:15 pm, happy to arrive, the last two hours the waves have increased and Maja moves quite a bit. We take diesel and a mariner shows us a place in the marina. We did 140 nautical miles in 31 hours. Our neighbors on the right are Dutch, a fairly young couple with three small children. And opposite, a whole family of Englishmen, grandparents, children and grandchildren, and their boat is called "Sacre Bleu"! Short walk in town, but it is gray and there are not many people out. Now, we really feel that we are on our way back to Norway. We're following the coast and we're going to do it for a long time. And, in addition, this is the first time we stop at a port that we had already visited going down, two years ago.

Formentera-Cartagena: 140 nm (252 km)

Florvåg-Cartagena: $7\,393 + 140 = 7\,533$ nm (13 559 km)



Barcelona-Minorca-Formentera-Cartagena

Wednesday, March 22, 2017. Cartagena



Cartagena

We slept well, a good night sleep seems good after our last night in small pieces. The weather is nice but windy. The marina is well equipped, so we do two washing machines. We wash everything and with this wind, it dries quickly. I go on the pontoons to look for blues and find four.



Washing

When I come home, the young Dutch mother has her children (about 6, 4 and 2 years old) playing on the pontoon. They climb on a three-step stool and jump on a pile of cushions. Then a little sewing for me, Jens' anorak of course.



A little sewing

We eat lunch, read the newspaper and go for a bike tour. We go around the harbor by the west and ride to the red mark we passed yesterday.



The red mark, seen from land

The wind is strong and the waves are bigger than yesterday. But Jens knew it and took advantage of a short window, which is now closed. Long blog then, inside because of the wind, a good fish dinner ("espada", swordfish in English, I think) with a kind of ratatouille.

Thursday, March 23, 2017. Cartagena

Gray and cool, 10 ° this morning, but the wind has calmed down. A tall yacht arrived last night and, good luck for me, she has a name with blue. We go to see the Fisher catamaran and talk with her owners. Peter is English but Martine is French.



The Fisher catamaran



Her ownrs, Peter and Martine

They invite us on board. It's a 28 foot but has much more room than Maja. They then come to see Maja quickly. They are storing and packing their luggage, they leave tomorrow by car to Normandy where they live. Tour in town and after half an hour, a cappuccino to warm us up.

We then visit a Chinese, those shops which have everything. We buy a step-foot to climb on Maja in front, the other broke yesterday, and other small things. I then ask a newsagent where I can buy fabric and she tells me very clearly where there is a shop. We find it, it is very small and has hundreds of fabrics, I think. She finds me yellow lining, it is of course to fix Jens' anorak.



The fabric shop

We ride around the harbor, this time towards the green mark. The port is very large and busy. Return to Maja, lunch and newspapers. Then sewing for me and blog. Jens talks with a young Italian who has his boat not far from us.



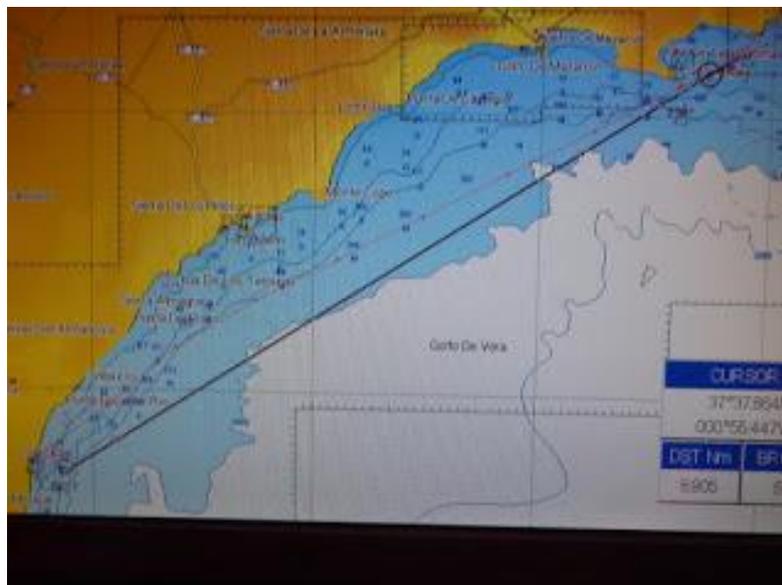
The young Italian and his boat

He comes to look at the weather forecast together with Jens. He has a sporty and Spartan boat and goes to England to participate in a solo regatta, Plymouth-Caribbeans. I finished the blog early enough and I make dinner today. At 10 pm, we hear the Italian leave. We are leaving tomorrow. We have a short window and think of going to Garrucha, but we must leave early, the wind will be strong again at the end of the day.

Friday, March 24, 2017. Cartagena-Garrucha



Bye, bye Cartagena



Our destination: Garrucha

We get up at 5.30 am and we leave at 6.45 am when the day begins to clear up. It is "cold", only 10 °. Little wind, from land, so no waves. We pass closed by the ships waiting to enter Cartagena harbor.



A ship waiting. Front



Side

Jens, who slept badly, takes a good nap, then it's my turn. We don't go very fast, the speedometer shows 5.5 knots (speed in the water) and the speedometer on the plotter shows 4.8 knots (speed on the bottom). It is a current that slows us down. Passing Cape Tiñoso, the wind drops completely and the wind vane turns in all directions. But that does not last. The wind turns and rises. Now it comes from the southwest, so almost in front of us. We are close to the wind. We have the mainsail tight and the engine. And the wind and the waves increase. At 2:15 pm, we listen to a Spanish weather forecast on the VHF radio that doesn't reassure me: gale F 8-9 in Barcelona, F 7-8 in the Balearic Islands! Fortunately it will only be F 5 around here. We have not yet arrived and the last two hours don't pass quickly. Maja is heeling, crashes in the waves and is well sprayed.



Maja against the waves

I hoped that the closer we got to the coast, the fewer waves there would be, that we would be a bit protected by the coast. But no, the wind and the waves follow the coast.



Where are Jens' pants?



Here!



The sea is white

We arrive at 4:45 pm (so after 10 hours navigation) in the port of Garrucha, where we had stopped in April 2015. We put ourselves first along a pontoon at the entrance of the port, but we can't stay there, it's too exposed. We then go to a pontoon more inside but on the wrong side, the wind pushes Maja towards the pontoon and the poor fenders are half flattened. A marinero shows us a third place, on the right side this time, where the wind pushes Maja away from the pontoon. Jens puts 5 mooring lines, the wind is still strong and waves enter the harbor. Phew! We are very happy to arrive. A black dog comes to see us, it is all ruffled by the wind. Ankerdram and chips of beetroot, carrots and turnips, that's good.



After three tries Maja is moored at this pontoon

Small walk in town, we try to find again a pizzeria where we had dinner in 2015. And we go back there. A good pizza, a salad and two beers for 15 €. In the evening the wind falls and all is quiet again.



Formentera-Cartagena-Garrucha

Cartagena-Garrucha: 49 nm (88 km)

Florvåg-Garrucha: $7\,533 + 49 = 7\,582$ nm (13 647 km)

Saturday, March 25, 2017. Garrucha



The parade of the trucks on the jetty

This morning, no wind at all, it's all calm. I go on the pontoons, by bike, but find no blues. I also go to the jetty and get stopped by a guard, it's private. I told him I had not seen the sign at the entrance to the jetty, and that's true. The trucks are coming and going, even on a Saturday. It must take hundreds of trucks to fill such a large ship. While I'm away, Jens is fixing the door.



Jens is fixing the door

The small wheels are very worn out and the door doesn't roll well. He finds exactly what he needs at the local hardware store and can fix it. Then we both ride into the countryside behind Garrucha. It is flat, at first marshy and then, further on, cultivated, large fields of broccoli. But it's not a beautiful countryside, it's messy and dirty. We take small dirt roads, which are full of flowers.



Broccoli fields



A flowery path

Back to the coast, we are further west of Garrucha, in a place called Vera. We ride on the main road and Jens is far ahead. At a crossroads, I recognize a bicycle shop where we have to turn left. He's so far away that he can't hear me, so I phone him. He comes back and we turn together towards the sea. During our walk, the wind has risen, very strong, this harbor is opened towards the south and the waves are coming in.



The wind is strong

We find Maja jumping up and down along her pontoon. It's not pleasant to be on board, it really moves a lot and there is too much wind to eat outside. So we decide to go to a restaurant. It's funny, two restaurants are side by side. One is empty and the other full and we go, of course, to the second one. It has a covered terrace so sheltered from the wind. We take four half portions and we have enough. The service is pretty slow, but we appreciate it, we don't want to go back on our dancing Maja.



In the restaurant, some men are celebrating something. They have a paper doll

After lunch, we'll see Maja and Jens add another rope. Now she has three in front, one in the middle and two behind. The neighbor on a large catamaran tells us that he measured the wind at F8 in the gusts! Maja is well secured, and we go for a long walk along the beach. Then we have to go back, but once inside, it's OK, Maja is moving but we don't hear the sound of the wind. I do the blog, Jens goes shopping and our dinner consists of a cup of tea and a toast. At 6 pm, the wind drops very quickly and everything becomes calm again. Jens takes the bikes on Maja, we'll leave tomorrow.



The lines are loose



Now they are stretched

Sunday, March 26, 2017. Garrucha-Puerto de San Jose

Quiet this morning, the wind turned west and is weak. We change our time, like everyone else. Jens returns the key, and to come back goes around the gate to the pontoon, like in 2015. We leave at 9:50 am. We see the white village of Mojacar where we rode in April 2015. It was the first true ride after my wrist fracture, I was riding with one hand and I remember buying knitting needles in this village.



Mojacar

The crossing is calm, light wind, F 2, from land, jib and motor. It's idyllic.



Idyllic



Hotel "Illegal" is still here

At 11.45 am, we passed the “Hotel Illégal”, a hotel built in a national park. Jens looks on the Internet, the Spanish Supreme Court issued a ruling in February 2016 for it to be demolished. But it is still there in March 2017. We are motoring along three harbors, the first one a fishing harbor and the other two industrial which are prohibited to boaters, except in case of emergency. Good lunch, sewing for me, sudoku, music for Jens. Time passes quickly as we follow the coast close enough and there is always something to look at. We arrive at Puerto de San José at 3:40 pm, a small harbor just before Cabo de Gata. It looks full, but a marinero shows us a small place between two sailboats. It’s quite narrow, but Maja is not wide, it’s just right.



Just a small place for us

Very pretty harbor and quite lively, we are Sunday. A Spanish couple on a sailboat a little further on tells us that they had a Fisher 31 before and that it is a very good boat. We agree. On the neighboring sailboat a sparrow is whistling. I give him bread and he disappears into the boom! Maybe he has a nest in it?



The little bird

Garrucha- Puerto de San Jose: 31 nm (56 km)

Florvåg-Puerto de San Jose: $7\,582 + 31 = 7\,613$ nm (13 703 km)



First time that we eat dinner outside

Monday 27 March 2017. Puerto de San Jose



Puerto de San Jose

One month today we came down to Spain, to Roses, where Maja was on shore. Time is flying. Last night we had a gust of wind from the west, so on the side for us. We were five boats, tight against each other, moored by the front on the dock and at the rear by "muertos", either a large chain or concrete blocks. It was irregular guts, it calmed down, it blew up ... Jens slept well but not me. This morning we climb a hill behind to be able to take a picture of San Jose harbor. The hill is steep and dry. We go down, go shopping and we restore us with an orange juice on a terrace on the harbor. Not many people today. Lunch on the boat, and Jens goes and see with a torch in the neighbor yacht's boom if he sees a nest. He doesn't see much, but twigs and feathers. Then nap and departure for our bicycle expedition to Cabo de Gata. The lady at the tourist office told us that it was 13 km, so 26 km roundtrip. That makes a lot. We'll see. Nice exit of the village, old mill, wide track, everything begins well. The landscape changes, sometimes dry and stony, sometimes green and fertile.



At the beginning, it's flat ...



We have climbed this road ... but there is more



An active grand-mother

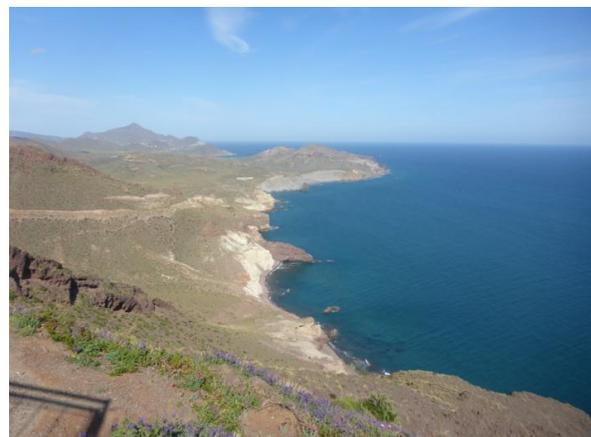
Then the ascent begins, long and pitiless. We climb, climb, mostly on bike and sometimes walking. The Cabo de Gata is a massive rocky promontory and is divided into two points, Punta Negra and Cabo de Gata. Between the two a long descent of 3 km ... that we would have to climb again to come back. We therefore stop at Punta Negra tower.



We walk the last meters to Ponta Negra



Cabo de Gata over there



Beautiful view

Beautiful views, beautiful flowers. Then we go down again, very slowly, we can't go fast, small stones and gravel make that we can slip quickly. We go to see Monsul beach with curious rock formations and then ride home. Jens' chain fell of twice and mine once, we are so shaken by the pebbles. We left at around 3 pm and are back at 6:45 pm, after 20 km and 200 m of altitude change. We're a little tired, we're going to sleep well tonight. Dinner on the boat of an omelet, quick blog, a little reading and in bed, we leave tomorrow, directly to Marina del Este.



Monsul beach

Tuesday, March 28, 2017. Puerto de San Jose-Marina del Este

Good weather, very quiet until tomorrow night, so we leave directly for Marina del Este. But we must not leave too early, we think to use about twenty hours and if we leave early, we will arrive in the middle of the night. We leave at 10.50 am, calm sea and good weather. Jens puts a line to fish. But what we forgot was that we are going through fish haven, where we don't have the right to fish, where the fish are protected. And a zodiac of the "Guardia Civil" is making a check.



The "GuardiaCivil"

Jens quickly rewinds his line and the guy sees nothing. He is busy in verbalizing, I suppose, an illegal lobster pot. We recognize Punta Negra (visited by bike yesterday) and Cabo de Gata.



Cabo de Gata

A little further on, I see on AIS the "Innocent Blue" we had seen in Cartagena. Then we give food to our pet, our spider that made a web in the corner of the alarm clock, on the shelf, in the dog-house. I kill a fly and Jens puts it in her web. She's very happy.



Our spider takes the fly

Good lunch, music, sudoku, reading, It's so quiet that we can do what we will. I do the blog without problem. We hear an exchange between the coast guards and a boat that saw an emigrant's embarcation. A plane and a boat of the coast guards will take care of it. At 6.30 pm, we pass Almerimar, where we stopped on our way down in April 2015. Then, as night is approaching, Jens heads off to sea. We want to move away from the coast and its lobster pots. Further on, where it is deeper, there is none.



I do the blog under way



We are going west, sunset is in front of us

Dinner of a mixture of chili con carne and a Galician ragout, it's good, tea, and beginning of the watches.



Wind speed: 0 m/s

The sky is very starry, too bad I can't take a picture. We slow down so that we won't be arriving too early, we had a favorable current until now and we went too fast (at 5.5 knots, 9.9 km / h, we are not talking about supersonic speed here). We change every two hours; Jens is sleeping well, me not too much. I still listen to radio broadcasts, it helps to pass time. We pass, in slow motion, before Motril between 5 am and 7 am.



Soon ...



Here it is



We pass in front of Almuñecar

And the sun rises when we arrive in Almuñecar, the city where we lived a year in 2000-2001. We motor along the beach quite close, it is deep, and continue towards Marina del Este where we arrive at 9 am. This is the first time we have a so calm crossing, no wind at all, all along. Relax, Max.

Puerto de San Jose-Marina del Este: 92 nm (166 km)

Florvåg-Marina del Este: $7\ 613 + 92 = 7\ 705$ nm (13 869km)



”Our” building



Arrival at Marina del Este

Wednesday, March 29, 2017. Marina del Este

So here we are at 9 am in Marina del Este, after 22 hours of very quiet crossing from Puerto de San Jose. I am a little ambivalent towards Marina del Este. It's a nice marina, near Almuñecar which I like very much, but on the other hand, it is here that I fell going from the boat to land and broke my wrist on February 24, 2015. And we are practically at the same place. I'm afraid to go down, I feel it's more difficult here than elsewhere else. Jens puts the gangplank and helps me. Good breakfast, small walk, the marina is more active than in February 2015, the supermarket and laundry are open, they were closed the last time. A lot of walkers and several boats with people on board.



Marina del Este

When we make a tour of the marina (and I see two blues), a man asks us to take a picture of him on his motorbike, in front of a boat. It turns out that he is Argentinean, from Mendoza ... and talkative. He tells us that he was a truck driver and that his truck and all his cargo was stolen twice, at night, between Mendoza and Buenos Aires. Walk to the beach, 100 m from the marina and Jens, always adventurous, offers to return to Maja to take our bathing suits. It's very beautiful, warm and we feel a bit groggy after a night sailing, this will wake us up. Sunbath first, 10 minutes on each side then a very quick swim. The water is at 15.5 °.



Swim

Lunch, long siesta for me and a short one for Jens and walk to find the start of the path that goes to Almuñecar along the coast, we think to take it tomorrow. Blog, dinner on Maja, outside, reading and in bed.

Thursday, March 30, 2017. Marina del Este

The British yacht next to us is unoccupied but her owner, who lives on land, comes to see her. It is a boat a little of the same kind as Maja and built at about the same time but bigger. We walk, by the small path that runs along the coast, to Almuñecar.



Marina del Este

Nice view towards the sea, but on the left a monstrosity of an unfinished construction ruins the landscape.



Awful

We go down on the nudist beach of Cotobro and we go for a short swim. We arrive in Almuñecar, pretty and lively, we hear a lot of French and Danish spoken. We walk, walk downtown to rent a car. Jens phoned two rental companies, but in fact we take the first one we meet, we have walked enough. We return by car to the "Rinconcillo" that the girls called "Trekanten" (the Triangle) for lunch. We take the menu at 11 €, with a glass of wine each. But the lady leaves the wine bottle on the table. Jens fills up his glass once more, we tell her, but she says it's offered by the house. We pay 24 € for both of us. They even have a "smørrebrød" menu. Funny idea to come from Denmark to eat Danish here ...



El rincencillo (Trekanten)



Danish “smørrebrød”



Paseo del Altillo

We walk a bit on the beach and we swim one more time. Walk in town, but it's deserted, it's siesta time. We do some shopping since we have the car and then go back by the old road to see if it is doable by bike. But it's a long, long, steep hill. You would have to walk several kilometers pushing the bikes. We are back at Maja at 6 pm and quiet evening. Short walk on the harbor after dinner, and I find a new blue.

Friday, 31 March 2017. Granada (by car)

We leave at 8:15 by car to Granada, by the motorway. Very beautiful mountain landscape and fast road. Before, in "our time", in 2000-2001, the road was winding and slow. We arrive in Grenada and Jens had spotted on the map that we must leave at the exit 128. Many cars are going out at this same exit, there is a traffic jam and this allows us to change: I take the wheel and Jens becomes navigator. We find "El Instituto Andaluz de Geofísica" without problem. Jens came there twice a week, by bus, from Almuñecar in 2000-2001. Jens meets old colleagues, Gerardo, Mercedes, Benito, Xavier and others, it's nice.



The old Institute



The new one

And I leave them to go sightseeing in Granada. I find my way to the neighborhood of Albaicín, the old quarter in front of the Alhambra. But once there, I get lost a little. I finally arrive at the Mirador de San Nicolás, which as its name indicates, offers a beautiful view of the Alhambra.



Lots of people, sellers and musicians. I take an orange juice, very expensive, 5 €, I surely pay for the beautiful view too. I go down to El Río Darro and go to Plaza Nueva where I rest on a bench and watch the world go by.



Balcony to rent to see Easter procession



Plaza Nueva

Then I walk back to find my scientists at the Institute. Easier said than done. I get lost and re-lost. The Albaicín is an old quarter on a hillside, where the streets are narrow, tortuous and steep, sometimes even stairs. I have a plan but all the little streets are not on it. But by asking my way several times, I arrive at the Institute at 2 pm sharp, tired and with tender feet.



Mercedes, Gerardo, Benito, Yolanda, Jens and me



La Sierra Nevada

We go to lunch together of tapas then we leave in two cars (Benito and Yolanda in one and we in the other) and Gerardo on his motorbike to Huétor Santillán, Benito's village, 13 km from Granada. He was born there and Yolanda, his wife came to spend her holidays there. The landscape is beautiful, splendid views over the Sierra Nevada and the village, at 1100 m above sea level, very pleasant. We leave the cars and the motorcycle, and walk on a good path to see where Río Darro has its source; this is the river that supplied water to the Alhambra. The river starts in a wooded, green and open place.



Source of Río Darro

We walk back, and it begins to make a lot of km for my poor feet, and we have coffee and eat good cakes at Benito's "cortijo". Benito bought this cortijo (small farm) from an elderly uncle and this allows him to cultivate his vegetables, make his olive oil and make wine. He produces well, but the funniest thing is that he doesn't like vegetables or wine. But he is very

generous with it, he gives us two liters of wine and two bottles of a liquor that he also makes with plants and that I like very much.



Coffe at Benito's cortijo

We thank them well then drive back, following Gerardo's bike, to Granada. We meet Gerardo's brother and we all have tapas for dinner in a nearby shopping mall. The tapas are excellent, fried shrimp, eggplant with honey, we enjoy it.



Gerardo, right and his brother Ben. Granada

We discuss well, the time passes quickly and at 11 pm we leave them to return to Marina del Este where we arrive at midnight. Special day, busy and without time to make the blog.

Saturday, April first, 2017. Marina del Este

Since yesterday evening, Jens is looking for his cap. Where did he put it? He looks everywhere in the boat and begins to think that he forgot it in Granada yesterday. To be continued ... Since I didn't have the time yesterday to make the Thursday blog, I do it between

10 am and noon. Then we go to get the car that stayed outside the Marina, the gate being closed yesterday at midnight. And what do I see? Jens' cap on the roof !



Jens' cap on the car roof

We then drive to La Herradura to see the campsite where we spent two weeks in August 2000 when we arrived from Norway. Always the same, pleasant and shaded. We return the car back in Almuñecar at 1 pm and, thrilled by these emotions, we take a clara in the Plaza de la Constitución, served of course with a tapa. We walk a bit in town, we feel a little bit 'at home' here. The lady selling newspapers smiles at me and I asked her if she remembered us, she said yes and we chat a little.



Park



Roman ruins



The castle

We walk all together by the little path along the coast. Jens and Gerardo walk fast enough, and we, Ben and I, follow calmly behind. It is a splendid day. In Playa del Muerto, Jens and I bathe quickly, then we continue our way. We arrive at 2 pm at the restaurant where Angeles and her family have already arrived. Friendly reunion, new contact between the Grenadinos and the Almuñecarians (?).



Angeles and Gerardo



Ben and Angeles



Jens and Andres



Jose



Angeles, Jose, Jens, Gerardo, Andres, Ben and me

Angeles and Jose rented us the apartment where we lived one year in 2000-2001 with Laila and Kristin and we became friends. In 2013, we again lived in this apartment three months, but this time only Jens and I. And in February 2015, Angeles lent us her car when we were with Maja in Marina del Este, which allowed Jens to take me to the hospital quickly when I broke my wrist. And we kept this car for four weeks, stationed at Malaga airport as we both returned to Norway. We still have bad conscience about it, but Angeles' only comment was: "No pasa nada" (no problem). It turns out that Gerardo taught Maria, at the University of Granada. (Maria is Andres' sister, Angeles' daughter). Everyone sympathizes, the food is excellent, the view beautiful and the wine abundant. We spend a moment that we will remember. Nobody is very enthusiastic to walk back to Marina del Este (except Jens) and the solution is organized by Angeles: Andres will drive, in two trips, everyone to see Maja. Angeles gives us a big bag of good avocados, and there's plenty for us to share with Gerardo and Ben. Then our friends leave us. Thanks to them for their friendship and kindness. No dinner tonight, a cup of tea and that's enough. A sailboat arrives in the marina and is a Dane. Jens discusses a little with the guy, short walk on the harbor and in bed. We leave early tomorrow to get closer to Gibraltar.

Monday, March 3, 2017. Marina del Este-La Duquesa

We wake up at 6:30 am and we drop the moorings at 7:30 am ... to motor back 3 m and stop. The rope of the neighbor's mooring passes behind us and prevents us from leaving. Jens must go through the right neighbor first, the big motor-sailor, and jump on the dock. He half falls and hurts his back a little. Decidedly, we have no luck with this dock. Then he goes on the boat on the left and detaches this rope. I motor back a little bit and it's OK. Jens ties again the boat and comes back. At last we leave. The Danish yacht left at 7:30, we see it in front of us when we go out of the harbor.

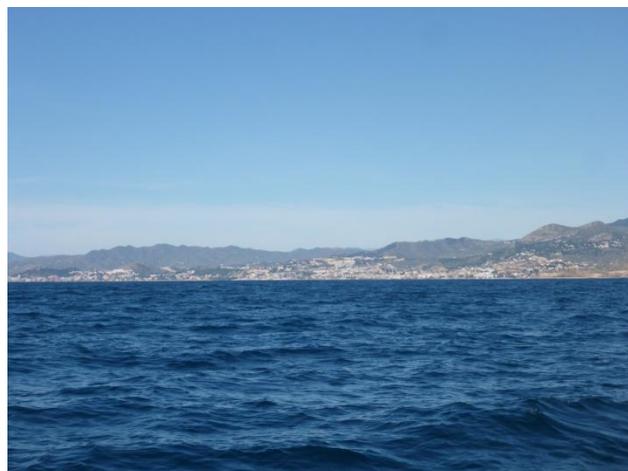


The sun raises back us

Maja rolls a little, small swell and little wind. We think of going to Marbella. We're going well, at 6 knots, there must be current with us. We see La Herradura, Nerja, Torrox, Malaga, Torremolinos.



Nerja. Europe balcony



Malaga

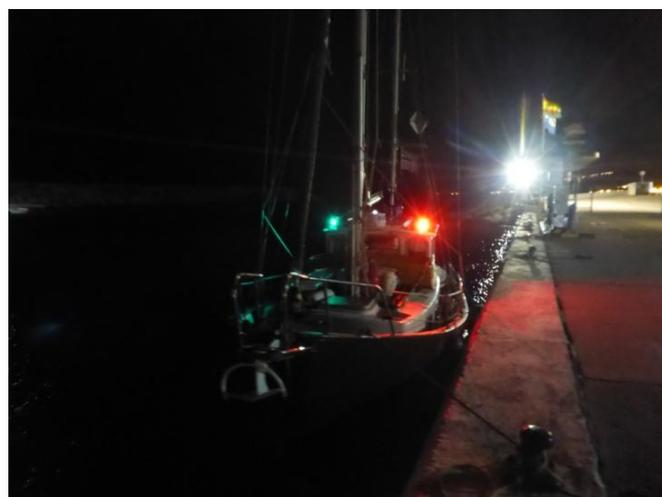
The coast is much built here. We take a nap in turn, then lunch. I can do the blog en route and Jens looks again at the weather forecast to pass the Strait of Gibraltar.



Nice weather



Jens looks one more time to the weather forecast, wind, waves and current



Maja. La Duquesa

Apparently, it would be OK tomorrow! So we have to go further than Marbella. All is well, we have a little wind behind now and Maja looks like a big butterfly with her mainsail on one side and her jib on the other. Jens tied the boom so it can't jibe (move abruptly from side to side). We pass Marbella at 6:30 pm. We dine and continue. Jens phones at La Duquesa marina and no problem, a marinero will welcome us. We get there at 10:15 pm. First it's hard to see the harbor entrance with all the lights in town, but when we spot the green flashing light we know where we have to go. No problem. The marinero is waiting for us on the waiting platform. We have to dock there and go and do the paperwork and pay first, and then he shows us our place. A cup of tea, a little reading and in bed. Tomorrow is a big day, we are going to pass the Gibraltar Strait the wrong way.

Marina del Este-La Duquesa: 77 nm (139 km)

Florvåg-La Duquesa: $7\,705 + 77 = 7\,782$ nm (14 007 km)

Tuesday, March 4, 2017. La Duquesa (Med.)-Barbate (Atlantic)



Our neighbor is called "Blue heaven"

I'll go early on our pontoon to see if, by chance, there is a blue. I can't go on the other pontoons, if I leave our pontoon I can't return, we have no key. And what do I see? Our neighbor is called "Blue Heaven", is that not a good sign? And I'm not superstitious....



Bye, bye La Duquesa

We leave at 8:30 am, the wind is from east so will push us in the right direction. We calculated that we must pass Gibraltar at noon to have the current with us in Tarifa. We go

slowly, we have plenty of time. We must be careful to the lobster pots, they are not marked, small and blue, one hardly sees them. Wind force 3-4, beautiful sea, it starts well.



The Rock. Calm ...

We see "The Rock" from afar and it's funny but in the news there is a lot of talk about Gibraltar right now with the Brexit, the Spaniards follow it with great attention. Many ships are waiting, anchored in the bay, which is called according to the person speaking, "Bahia de Algeciras" or "Bay of Gibraltar", or in front of the bay. There are also many ferries to Morocco.



Clouds over Morocco. Still calm ...

Radio exchanges are constant between the ships sailing and between Tarifa Radio and the ships. Those who sail warn on which side they will cross or pass each other, and Tarifa Radio makes frequent checks, asking where a ship comes from, where she is going, her cargo etc. At noon we pass Gibraltar and head for Tarifa, the southernmost point of Spain. We eat a lunch of knekkebrød and "pålegg" (what we put on the bread) and even make tea. All the guides

warn: do not trust the wind in Gibraltar when you go west, there will be a lot more wind in Tarifa. It's hard to believe, it's a nice little wind here, but it's true.



Way point to Tarifa

The wind and the waves increase the closer we get there. Up to 4 nautical miles from Tarifa, I hold on. But when the wind increases to Force 6 and the waves from behind are two meters, I retire to my apartments, Jeannette is not here anymore.



Waves. Photos taken by Jens. It is not calm anymore!



I am scared



13 m/s. Force 6 +

I am scared and to distract myself, I sing my entire repertoire, from Barbara to Georges Brassens through Sissel Kyrkjebø, a Norwegian singer. The waves are high and short. It's Jens who takes the pictures now. We pass Tarifa at 3:15 pm and just after the corner, the wind remains strong but the waves decrease a lot, we are a little sheltered by the land.



We have passed Tarifa lighthouse. The hardest part is done



Cheers!

We celebrate the passage with a kiss and a small glass, we are very happy and a little proud but especially we are full of admiration for our good Maja. Even at the worst moments, she took the waves with the utmost calm, rising, descending, leaning and straightening gently. She didn't have any brutal moves, knocking, falling into the hole or twisting in a wave. Jens had put the protective panels on the windows, but not a drop of water had arrived there. And although the waves came from behind and sometimes broke, Maja didn't get any water in the cockpit. We continue to Barbate, the first harbor after Tarifa. To pass Tarifa, we had jib and a little engine, because, despite all our calculations, we actually had the current against us. But after Tarifa, we only go with the jib and go to 5 and even to 6 knots, there is no more current against. I make the blog en route. We are now on the Atlantic, our sea says Jens who is very happy. Finished the nose of Maja at the dock and a mooring behind, now there are floating pontoons (because of the tide) where we put ourselves alongside. Barbate is a large marina half deserted, but a good harbor. We get there at 6:50 pm and we go to a long pontoon in the sun. A marinero comes to us and, laughing, warns us that this place is for a boat of 24 m and the price accordingly. We move quickly. Short walk, dinner in the sun and bed at 10:20 pm, Jens is quite tired but I am very, very tired, strong emotions, you know.



Cartagena-Barbate

La Duquesa-Barbate: 52 nm (93 km)

Florvåg-Barbate: $7\,782 + 52 = 7\,834$ nm (14 101 km)

Wednesday 5 March 2017. Barbate

I slept like a log, 9 hours of sleep! When Jens wants to wash himself, here on the boat, no more water, and the tank is practically full. I'm still lying in bed and take a picture of Jens looking at the water pipe. He disassembles the filter, a pipe, tries and now the water flows. Breakfast inside, it's windy and the cockpit is in the shade. We have the sun in the evening but not in the morning. Then he goes to register Maja at the marina office. This almost empty marina employs three secretaries! They don't have much to do, I think.



Maja. Barbate

Jens asks if there are more people in the summer, the lady answers that yes but they have fewer people since the price has doubled, from 5 € to 10 € per night. That's nothing. From the boat we see many people walking around the marina, and they walk fast, to exercise. Jens takes out the bikes and we go to see the large beach which is a little to the west of the marina. The waves are smaller than yesterday. Then we go into town. Barbate is a city of 20,000 inhabitants, touristy for Spaniards, few foreigners. There is a beautiful promenade along the beach, in town, and a tractor is raking it. We take a clara, served with olives, the free tapas are over now. Returning to the boat, we do two laundries, with this wind it will dry quickly. Lunch and bike tour along the coast, in a natural park.



Beautiful path

Beautiful path, wide and lots of flowers. We go up to a tower, the Torre del Tajo.



Torre del Tajo



Barbate harbor

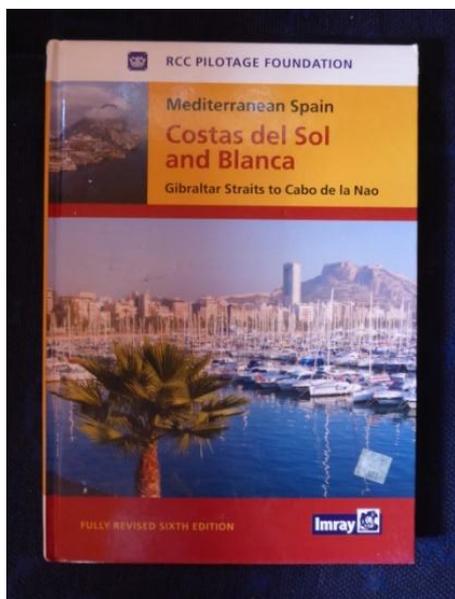


Many of these blue flowers. Anchusa?

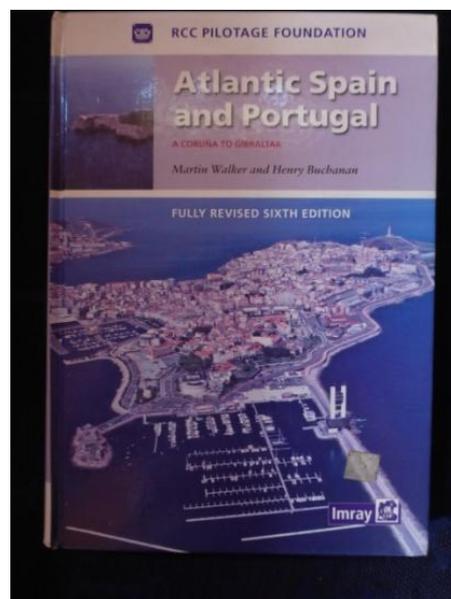
I wanted to go home early to have time to do the long yesterday blog, but Jens wants to go swimming, not me. We come home at 6 pm, blog until 8 pm then dinner in town, good fresh fish served with vegetables (not the common fries, it is appreciated), including a small vegetable that looks like wild asparagus, even thinner . This is called "tagarninas" in Spanish (we ask for the name), and I find on the Internet that it is called "scolymus hispanicus" in Latin, "spanish oyster thistle" in English and "chardon espagnol" in French. And Jens bought some today from a lady in town. We'll do it tomorrow. I finish the blog late and we go to bed. We have a neighbor now, a small Austrian sailboat that passed the Strait of Gibraltar today.



No too many boats at the marina



This one is finished



Now it's this one

Thursday 6 March 2017. Barbate

It's still blowing a lot. Jens asks our Austrian neighbors if they want fresh bread, no, because they are going to Cadíz today. By this wind! And their boat is small, 26 feet (Maja is 30). Their plan is to sail to Saint Petersburg. We ride, along the coast but this time on the main road, towards Trafalgar, to the northwest. The road goes up but the wind helps us. Trafalgar is now a seaside resort, not very pretty. We wanted to go to see the lighthouse, but the road is sanded and you have to walk far enough in the sand.



Trafalgar lighthouse over there

We shall see it from the sea when we pass by. From Trafalgar, we take a small road, a track even, in the back country. Very pretty countryside, green, neat and lots of cattle.



Riding our bikes

We climb, climb, sometimes walking and come to Vejer de la Frontera, a small white town perched on a hill. In the Plaza de España you can hear English, French, German, it is a tourist town. A tapas restaurant looks nice and we have two tapas each. Downhill all the way and back to Barbate by the main road. Very nice ride of 36 km. Dinner of our "tagarninas", it's good, a bit like green beans. The weather forecasts predicts strong wind tomorrow, I know one who would like to stay here ...



Near Vejer de la Frontera. A plant I have never seen



Vejer de la FRontera. Plaza de España



Vejer de la Frontera



Tagarminas

Friday, March 7, 2017. Barbate-Cadiz

Jens speaks with a yacht "captain", a 12 m boat, arrived last night. They passed the Strait of Gibraltar yesterday, by very strong wind, F 8-9 and waves of 3-4 m. A wave filled their cockpit. They must be crazy! We discuss, to leave or not to leave. Jens talks with a marinero, a neighbor and both say that even with a strong wind the waves will not be very large. And this morning there is little wind. I let myself be convinced ... And we leave at 9:30 am. Already to leave the harbor, we have to pass the waves from the front, Maja goes up and down, and in addition, the fishermen have installed a large tuna net near the harbor exit. Barbate is a great center for tuna fishing. This net is 2 km long. We pass by the orange buoy that marks its end. Then we turn northwest. In the beginning, little wind then the wind increases, it's an alternation of strong winds and calmer periods. But the calm periods are becoming rarer and rarer and we have a strong wind all the rest of the way. We go with the jib only and have a good speed. We hear an exchange between two anchored ships, perhaps in Gibraltar. One warns the other that his anchor is dragging and that he has no engine, a mechanic is doing repairs on it. And the other replies that he also had no engine, for the same reason. We don't know what happened afterwards. To pass Trafalgar light house, you have to go far at sea, there are rocks. And there, as we are farther away from land, therefore less protected, the waves are bigger, 2 m, Jeannette is in her hole. Jens is steering mostly manually, the auto-pilot has problem. The steering wheel also has trouble and makes strange noises. I think by myself: "I hope that it will not let us down," but in fact we have the tiller, outside, in reserve.



We pass Trafalgar lighthouse

When we are between Barbate and Trafalgar, we are almost downwind and the jib, at times, inflates and deflates, doesn't know whether it will be on the right or on the left. And when the wind fills it up again, it gives a violent blow, it must not be good for the mast. Everything must be really strong, the force of the wind and the movements of the waves put enormous pressure on the boat.



Big waves ... again!

Then after Trafalgar, we turn more towards north and have the wind more on the side. Maja is then badly balanced, in the gusts, she turns towards the wind. Jens then reduces the jib and it gets better. He also realizes that the propeller is not in a good position. Normally, when we are sailing, we put it in the reverse position, but with this wind, it doesn't work. He puts it in forward position and it gets better too. At one point, he sees on the map another large net for tuna. On the map, you can pass between the net and land. But the net is not exactly where it should be and there is not much room between it and the land. There is no question, with this wind, to go back to sea to pass it and Jens decides to pass on it. We are sailing, so the propeller doesn't turn and we pass. We have lunch of knekkebrød and water. The radio announces, every half hour, a "gale warning" (force 8) for the Strait of Gibraltar-Cadiz area, just where we are and we don't understand well for when. That doesn't help with the "matelote's" moral. Speaking of matelote, I think of my friend Margret of "Longway" who knows all these emotions.



This bridge was not finished in 2015



Cadiz

We approach the bay of Cadiz, immense bay. We hoped that in the bay we would be a little protected, but not at all. The bay is oriented north-west / south-east and to go to the marina we turn towards southeast, exactly against the wind. And the wind is now force 7, fortunately the waves are small. But going against a force 7 is not obvious. We have to put more power than normal, otherwise we do not move forward. The wind sends us sprays that pass over the dog-house and arrive in the cockpit. I know one who will be very happy to arrive. We go slowly but finally we arrive at the marina "Puerto America" entrance which is very narrow and with this wind and these waves, you have to aim. But Jens knows his Maja well and we pass, no more waves, but still a violent wind. Jens phones and the guy says first to go to the waiting dock, so we have to dock there and then move to our place. Jens asks if we can go directly to a place and he agrees. Two marineros await us and take our lines. It's 5:30 pm. Phew! Phew! Phew! Hard day for the queen, again. I decided, when I was in my hole, that in two days (the Strait of Gibraltar and today), we made our quota of strong winds for one month, that's Jeannette's law.



Good to be in the harbor

Barbate-Cadiz: 36 nm (65 km)

Florvåg-Cadiz: $7\,834 + 36 = 7\,870$ nm (14 166 km)

Saturday, April 8, 2017. Cadiz

Today, calm day, after all the emotions of yesterday, but the wind is not calm, it's blowing as much as yesterday. We take breakfast in the doghouse, it's brighter and warmer than below. From Maja, I see a name on a yacht which looks like "azul" (blue in Spanish) but I'm not sure. I take a picture with the zoom and sure enough it's a blue. I don't dare to walk on the pontoons to look for blue, the wind is so strong that I'm afraid of falling in the sea. Then we remain to work a little. I make a new file with the photos of flowers taken from Cartagena until now. Then we ride downtown. On leaving the marina, we meet the three Englishmen who arrived last night. They come from Chipiona, from the northwest, so against the wind! They used all day to make 17 miles, against the strong wind and waves of two meters. It's madness, and they recognize it! Cadiz is a very old and beautiful city. I probably take the same photos as in February 2015, the giant trees, the ramparts, the forts. We have lunch of tapas on a small square where children are playing football, 13 € for the two of us, it's really cheap. We go to the market and buy mussels and other shells for tonight. We return to the boat, newspaper, blog, dinner in the sun of our shells and the good white wine offered by Raquel and Pepe in Barcelona.



One of the four market entrances



Cadiz



Our dinner

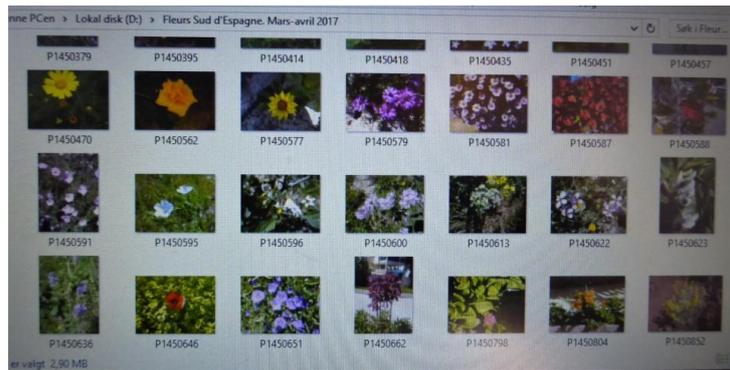
Sunday, April 9, 2017. Cadiz

A large cruise ship arrives at 8 am. She backed in the harbor, helped by three tugs. Breakfast in the doghouse. Then Jens starts working in the engine.



Jens works in the motor

He changes the coolant. To do this he had to heat the engine, he starts the engine and puts it gear, and Maja is pushing the pontoon. But the wind, very strong, is against, I think that compensates, Jens says there is no problem. He empties the liquid several times and, at the end, tastes it! Me, I class my photos of flowers and start the blog. Then at 11:30 am, I ride alone to town. I walk around, see a gypsy dancing, go for pieces of glass, go to see Fort San Sebastian and go home. Jens worked in the engine until 13:45. When he finished, he cuts his hair and go to take a well-deserved shower.



I “work” with my photos



He is playing the guitar and she is dancing

The wind is still very strong but will decline tomorrow, Monday. We eat a late lunch, go on the beach, sunbath and have a quick swim, and then we’ll see the religious processions that begin today.



Easter processions

Big floats with religious motives are carried by men and parade, in music, in the streets. A crowd follows this, it is good humored, the children are eating ice cream, the café terraces are full, it reminds me a little of May 17, the Norwegian national day.



Procession

Then we find the cafe where we ate tapas yesterday and this time we take only two. It's good and we pay 10 €. Back to the boat at around 8:30 pm and I finish the blog. We are talking of leaving tomorrow, but the wind must drop first.



Jens

Monday, April 10, 2017. Cadiz-Chipiona



Churros con chocolate

I'm tired of the wind ! Since we passed Gibraltar, it's blowing a very strong wind, it makes noise, carries dust, it is supposed to drop today, a ver... We go into town this morning, I go to the post office and then I want to taste the "churros con chocolate", but Jens takes churros and a coffee. It is true that the fatty churros soaked in a thick sweet chocolate is not light, light, but it's good. I am tired, have slept badly, at two in the morning I even added a mooring. Jens goes shopping and I go straight back to Maja. But with my well known sense of direction, Jens arrives almost at the same time as me. He wants to leave. He looked at the weather forecast for the Portugal coast and the end of the week seems quite calm. So we have to hurry a bit. First, he thought of doing Cadiz-Ayamonte (on the Portuguese border) but it would be a long day. So we're going to Chipiona, it will reduce the distance. But the wind is still strong, it has dropped a bit but it is not the light breeze dreamed by Jeannette. It is true that the farther we go from Cadiz, the less wind there will be. We eat lunch, read the newspaper a little and we leave, it's 2:45 pm.



The marina entrance. We sailed in with a Force 7!



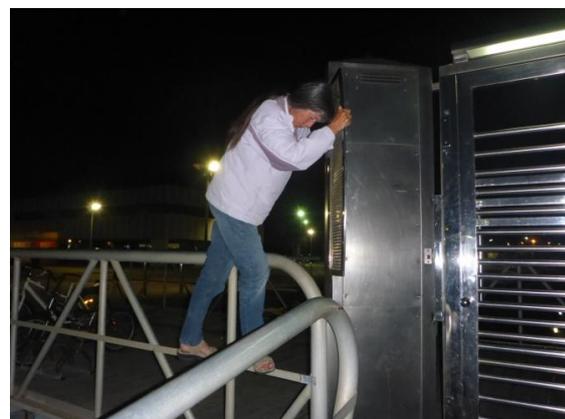
It's not calm, calm, but it's OK

I'm nervous, I prepared my hole, but for nothing, everything goes well. The worst is in the harbor, wind and waves but then it goes well. Good little crossing and arrival in Chipiona at 6:45 pm. The coast in front of Chipiona is full of rocks, but by passing well outside the marks, there is no problem. We recognize the lighthouse, the large church and the “corrales”, small walls that trap fish.



The “corrales” are marked on the chart

Dinner of ravioli and my nice Jens offers me to do the dishes alone while I go looking for blues (and I find one). A special husband. We want to take a short walk, but don't have a key, we can't return it tomorrow, we are going to leave early, before the office opens. So we step over the fence, to get out and back.



We don't have a key ...

On a parking lot, we see a man who goes fishing in the corrales. We talk and, according to him, it is a tradition that dates back very, very far, maybe to the Phoenicians. The city pays a man who maintains them and the members of the association (who must live in Chipiona) pay a small annual fee. They fish fish and squids in the holes of the small walls.

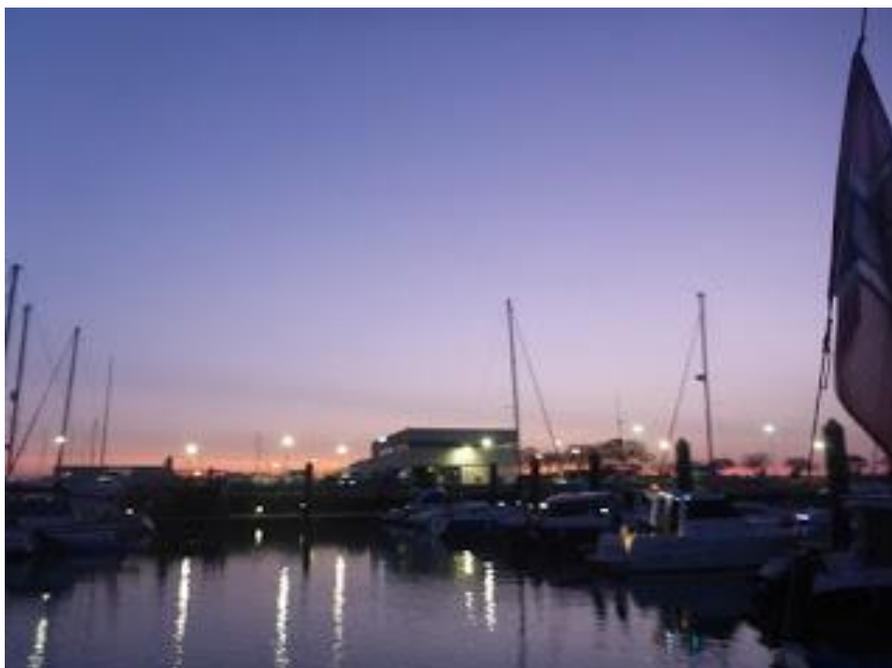


Chipiona. The lighthouse and the big church

Cadiz-Chipiona: 19 nm (34 km)

Florvåg-Chipiona: $7\,870 + 19 = 7\,889$ nm (14200 km)

Tuesday, April 11, 2017. Chipiona-Ayamonte. Spain



Bye, bye Chipiona

We leave at 7:35 am from Chipiona, it is hardly day. Calm weather, little wind but a swell that arrives directly from the Strait of Gibraltar where there is another gale warning. Good crossing but this swell makes Maja roll a little and Jens and I don't feel very well, especially me. I go outside and I'm not in good shape.



Not feeling very well



To drink Coke helps



Our spider

We get visitors, small flies and we catch two for our spider. But she doesn't like them and prefers the two that came by themselves in its web. Jens eats lunch but a little piece of bread is enough for me. But at around 2 pm, the movements of Maja become less pronounced and I feel better, I can even do the blog.



Maja was on land here in December and January 2014

We are approaching the Guadiana, the river which marks the border between Spain and Portugal. We have to follow a channel, otherwise it's not deep and then we have to follow the dike. We take diesel on the Portuguese side and cross to Ayamonte (Spain) where we arrive at 6:15 pm.



Marina entrance. Ayamonte

We recognize the marina and the city. We spent several days here in November 2014 and then in February 2015. Maja stayed two months ashore in Vila Real de Santo Antonio, just in front, in Portugal, in December 2014 and January 2015. Ayamonte is a pretty white town, animated in this "Semana Santa". We go for a walk and then eat in a restaurant, there are not many people, it's too early. A procession will leave the church at 8:30 pm, we think we'll see it, but it will only arrive on the square at 11:30 pm! It makes tours and detours and stops often, it is necessary to change the porters. We go home and I hear the procession accompanied by drums and trumpets at midnight, but Jens is sleeping.



Ayamonte

Chipiona-Ayamonte: 54 nm (97 km)

Florvåg-Ayamonte: $7\,889 + 54 = 7\,943$ nm (14 297 km)

Wednesday, April 12, 2017. Ayamonte

Good quiet night, after the procession. This morning, we are not very active and stay on the boat. Several boats are occupied and Jens talks with the Dutch neighbor. After a quick lunch, we take the ferry to Portugal. Jens was here in 1968 on a Vespa trip from Denmark to Portugal, and he thinks it's still the same ferry.



Ayamonte the White, seen from the ferry

The fishing boats on the Ayamonte side are moored at a quay along the river and, with the current, it must not always be easy to dock. The journey takes a quarter of an hour. We ride along the marina and see if we see Pia's boat "Hanna Brown", Pia is the lady we met in November 2015. But we don't see her. We also go to the yard where Maja was on the ground but the office is closed. We pedal on the long dyke and go on the beach. Ayamonte has no beach and many Spaniards come here for the beach and for fishing.



On the beach



Along the Guadiana, on the Portuguese side

We bathe and are surprised by the water temperature, 20 °. We go back home by the 4:30 pm ferry. Jens wants to pay before the office closes, we leave tomorrow. He goes shopping and makes a pizza while I do the blog. Nice evening, calm, I hope it will last.



Calm evening

Thursday, April 13, 2017. Ayamonte (Spain)-Portimao (Portugal)



We leave at 7:35 am with very light wind. We have to go far south before we can turn west, because of sandbars. I change the courtesy flag, take down the Spanish one and hoist the Portuguese. We go between the lobster pots, not always well marked. Jens takes a nap and then it's my turn. We're making good progress, with the engine only, there's no wind. Good lunch. We pass the island of Culatra, the sandy island where we anchored in 2014.



Culatra lighthouse

We also recognize Faro, a large white town and see beautiful sandy beaches. Until 5:30 pm it's idyllic, but idylls have an end. The wind rises, fairly strong and right in the nose. And our Maja starts to frolic. In addition the autopilot breaks down. Jens pulls out the fuse and puts it back and it works a short time and then stops definitely shortly afterwards. From 5:30 to 7:30 pm, we are not moving fast.



We are not moving fast

We see the lighthouse marking Portimao harbor, our goal, but it seems that it doesn't get closer. Finally, we arrive, and right back the pier, it's calm.



Portimao lighthouse

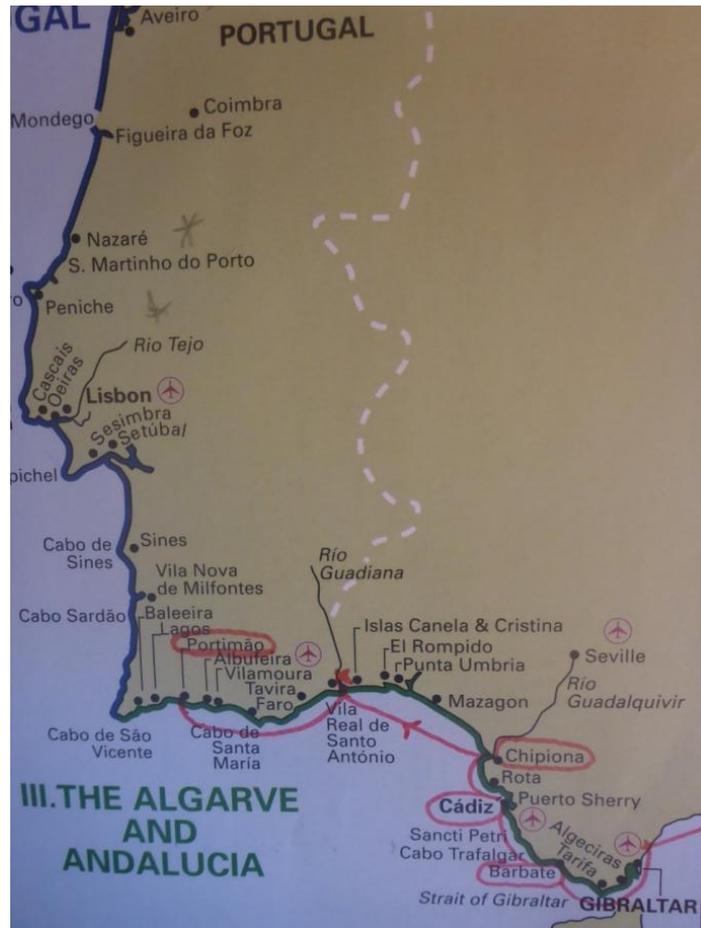
We have two options: marina or anchoring. Behind the great pier, a bay is advised as a good place to anchor and eight yachts are already there. We anchor, it changes a bit from marinas and it's been a long time since we did it. The last time was with Catherine, my sister, in Sardinia, I believe, in October 2016. The anchor digs well from the first try. We are very happy to have arrived and we are thinking of staying here tomorrow.



Maja is anchored

Ayamonte (Spain)-Portimao (Portugal): 62 nm (112 km)

Florvåg-Portimao: $7\,943 + 62 = 8\,005$ nm (14 409 km)



Gibraltar-Portimao

Friday, April 14, 2017. Portimao



The cruise ship

Very quiet night, anchored. At 8 am a cruise ship arrives, accompanied by its tug. At breakfast, Jens makes toast with the bread bought in Barcelona in early March. This is not a good sign, but it's still good, it must be full of conservatives. Then we work. Jens changes the

Norwegian flag. I had thought of repairing the old one again, but the corners are really torn. He puts the one we found too big, but in fact it's OK.



Jens changes the flag.



He tidies up the trunk

He also cleans the trunk behind the cockpit, where the ropes are stored. We must have miles of ropes. Me, I sew. I change the zipper of my anorak pocket. We eat then put the tender to the water to go ashore. The town of Portimao is on one side of the bay and on the other side are beaches, cliffs and nature. We go to natural side. Nice path, lots of flowers and we walk to the lighthouse, this lighthouse that it took us so long to reach yesterday. We swim on a beach outside the dike, so in the sea, not in the harbor and the temperature is 20 °.



Good walk



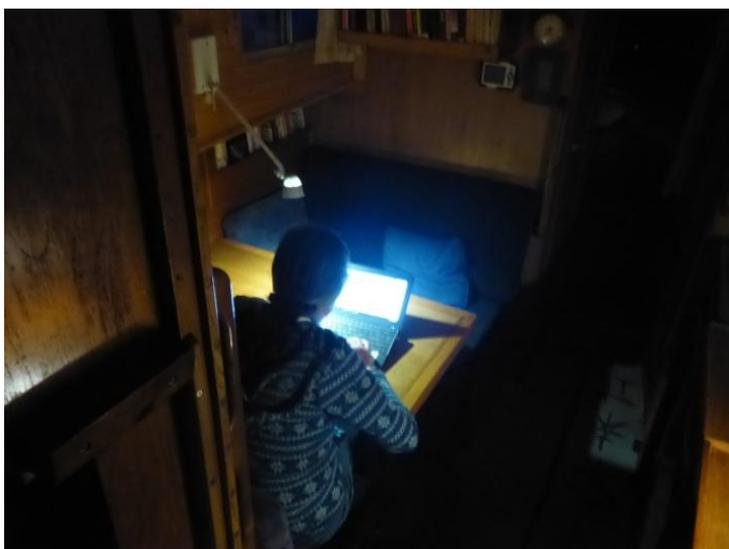
The anchored yachts. Maja is brown



On the beach

Back to Maja in the tender, blog, dinner. Then we take up the tender, we leave early tomorrow. Jens looked once more at the weather forecast and it's good. It will be north wind but not strong, no more than force 3-4. The prevailing wind is from the north, and if we want the wind from the south, we have to wait a long time. That should be fine. We're going to make a long leg, the first port after turning the corner of Cap de São Vicente is Sines. But we will pass it by night, so we hope to go as far as Sesimbra, a little bit south of Lisbon.

Saturday, April 15, 2017. Portimao-Sesimbra



7 o'clock. I send mails "no blog today"

We take up the anchor and leave at 7:40 am. I make an announcement in the blog to say there will be no blog today. As we go out, we pass a cruise ship which is entering the harbor. Little wind and small waves. I take a nap, then Jens. We go along the south coast of Portugal, the Algarve, alternating wild cliffs and built beaches. We pass Lagos, where we stopped on our way down and we approach the Ponta de Sagres, a great austere cliff and finally the Cabo de São Vicente, once considered the end of the known world.



Cabo de São Vicente

The guide warns that when you pass this cape, the wind and the waves will increase, and it's true. We had virtually no wind and now the wind increases to force 3-4. That's what was planned and it's ok but now no more reading or doing a sudoku, Maja is moving well, up and down.



Spash!



Up and down

And the wind is from the north so right in front. We try to tack with the jib and the engine. It's more comfortable than bumping directly into the waves and we're going faster. But it makes the way longer and Jens calculates that it is not profitable for us. So we try a new tactic: we don't go directly against the wind and the waves but at 15 ° from the wind with the mainsail tight and the engine. And that's how we progress, we'll catch those 15 ° later when the wind will go down. Everything goes well when the autopilot stops. Jens steers by hand, then me. It's funny, it reminds me of my sailing youth. We have a line that we follow on the plotter. After an hour, Jens tries to restart the auto-pilot and it works, and it will work all the way to Sesimbra. We are not going fast, but we are moving in the right direction. We pass Arrifana, the bay where we had anchored on our way south and where a big wave made us leave in a hurry the next morning, but it is too far to take pictures. The day passes, the time of the dinner

arrives then the night shifts. We are far away at sea where it's very deep so we are not at risk to encounter lobster pots in the dark.



To wash the dishes is a sport



One of the seagulls that are following us



We are progressing in the dark

We pass Sines, the first harbor, at around 2 am. A group of seagulls flies parallel to us, on the right side, side of the green light for a very long time. I can make a picture of one seagull. Jens sees dolphins that also stay with us for some time. The wind drops at around 2 am but the waves take longer to calm down.



Sunrise

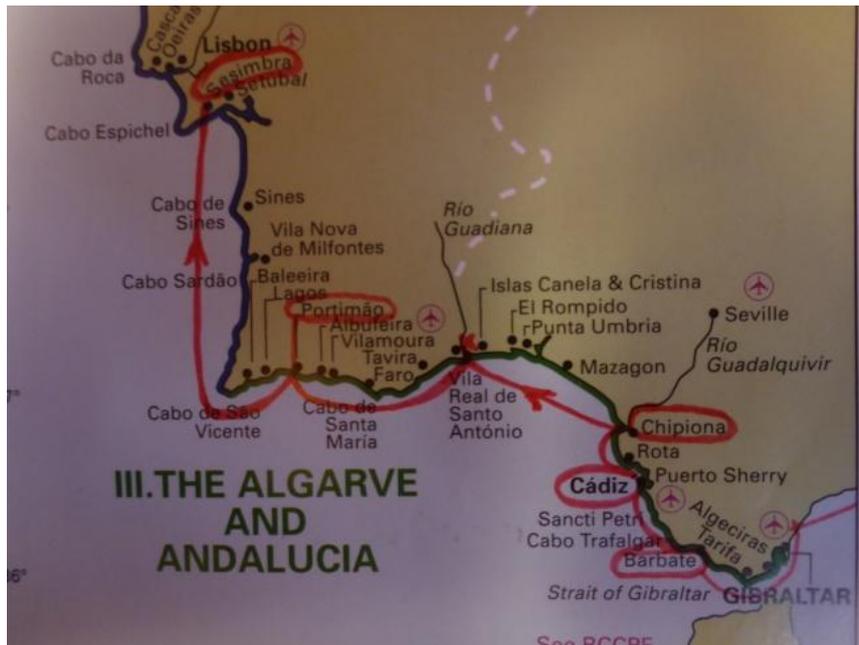


Many seagulls welcome us in Sesimbra

We arrive in Sesimbra at 9:30 am at our old Spanish time, but 8:30 am Portuguese local time on Easter Sunday. It's beautiful, it's quiet and hundreds of seagulls on the water welcome us. Another good night crossing that ends well.

Portimao-Sesimbra: 112 nm (202 km)

Florvåg-Sesimbra: $8\ 005 + 112 = 8\ 117$ nm (14 610 km)



Sunday, April 16, 2017. Sesimbra



The new flag is starting to fray in the corners

We have a good breakfast and I go and take a shower, it seems good. We ride to the city, it's quite animated, and being Easter Sunday, a lots of Portuguese tourists are in the town, Lisbon is not far. We enjoy very much Sesimbra, it is a real town of fishermen, pleasant and authentic. At the tourist office, the girl tells us that Easter Monday is not a holiday here, everything will be open tomorrow. We feel on vacation today, beach, sunbathing, short sea swimming and to celebrate our good advance towards north, we eat a fish soup in town, with a wonderful view. Back to Maja, we talked about a nap but decide to hold out until tonight, we will sleep better tonight. We have a new neighbor, a big motor boat with a name that I appreciate. At 5:30 pm, the wind suddenly rises and blows for two hours. Our neighbors on

the other side, a German couple, tell us it's like that every day. We go to the beach a little too late, around 6 pm and it's "fresquicito" with the wind. Dinner on the boat, outside but with a sweater, of a good salad composed by Jens and in bed early. Another bad news after Trump, Erdogan wins his referendum.



The beach and the fort



We fell like in holyday



Our new neighbor "Kind of Blue"



It's quite steep to come home

Monday, April 17, 2017. Sesimbra



The marina. Sesimbra

We slept very well, we catch up with our lack of sleep last night. I find in my "archives" that we were here, in Sesimbra on October 23, 2014. Maja did a long trip since that time. Another quiet day, newspaper, beach. Jens goes to buy camping-gaz and I walk on the pontoons looking for blues. He buys fruit at a fruit shop and there, the lady also sells homemade soup. Jens takes two portions, 1 € each and with a melon that will make our lunch, it changes from our sandwiches. We then invite the German neighbors, Klaus and Monika, to come and have a coffee. Monika made a cake and brought us two pieces. They visit Maja and then we go and visit their yacht, Tadea, a 12 m steel boat. They will soon leave for Madeira and cross the Atlantic. We sympathize well. Another couple comes to visit them, Heike (German) and her husband Fernando (Portuguese), also live on their boat in the marina, a 14 m sailboat. We return to the beach and, luxus, use the two large bath towels that Kuvvet's sister offered us in Datça, Turkey. A tall sailboat with four masts is anchored in front of the beach. We go back to Maja, I make the blog and we eat shells at a small restaurant. We have a green salad, an octopus salad and "perceves". We ask the owner to write the name on a paper. Back on Maja we search on the Internet. The Latin name is "Pollicipes Pollicipes". These are mollusks

which have a mushroom-like shape, with a cylindrical foot and a wider form divided into several points at the top and they grow vertically. It is very popular in Portugal and Spain and can reach 90 € per kg. There is hardly any food in it, we eat only the muscle that is in the foot. We have half a portion for 6 €, it's "interesting." Back to Maja in the dark, me in front with a white light and Jens behind with a red light, the distance between the city and the marina is about 2 km.



The “perceives”. Goose neck barnacles



Detail

Tuesday, April 18, 2017. Sesimbra

Gray and, while we breakfast outside, the wind rises suddenly and will blow strong all day. It was predicted by the weather forecast and we are happy to be in a harbor. We don't do much today. We go shopping in town and when I see the gray and windy weather I stay in pants and put on my light anorak but this wind although from the north is not cold and I'm too hot. We eat lunch on Maja, then newspaper (El Pais and the Intern. New York Time) and I put my leeks to cook.



Fisheries

We have guests tonight, a Portuguese colleague of Jens working in Lisbon and his family. I know, I know, I always make rolled leeks with ham when we have guests, but it's easy, good and new for most people. Then we go to the beach. Not a very good idea. The sun appears and disappears, and the wind is so strong that it sends us sand in the eyes, in the hair, ears etc and, in addition, the water is cold, only 16 °. We don't stay long. We go back and finish the preparation of the meal. Fernando, Ana Cristina and their daughter Mariana (16) arrive at 7:30 pm. We take the aperitif outside but go in for the rest of the meal, the wind is still strong. Good evening, friendly. Mariana is still on holiday, her high school starts again tomorrow. Jens made his fruit salad with cream and everybody enjoys it.



Ana Cristina, Mariana and Fernando

Wednesday, April 19, 2017. Sesimbra

No wind today and the weather is fine. We ride into town, leave our bikes chained to a post and climb on foot to the castle, up there on the hill. We had been there in October 2014, but by another path. This time, we make a detour, a kind of big loop. The beginning of the path is scarcely marked and we walk in the flowers.



Start of the path



We shall up there





The castle

Then the path gets better, very nice walk, lots of flowers, not too hot. We arrive at the ramparts which, in fact, protected an entire village. A café offers "tostas", a kind of croque-monsieur and we take one of goat cheese, tomatoes, oregano and accompanied with a little bit of fig jam. It's very good. Then we go down again more directly by a staircase that arrives in town.



Going down

A good bath refreshes us, and we recover our bikes and ride back to Maja. At the end of the afternoon, we invite our neighbors, Klaus and Monika, to take a Kir. Then dinner of a soup (in fact it's a large portion, at 1 € that we share) and the leftover from yesterday. And walk on the dike in the evening after dinner.



Klaus and Monika

Thursday, April 20, 2017. Sesimbra

Change of program: we were thinking of going to Lisbon with the boat as Jens planned of working a few days at the Institute there. But we like it here in Sesimbra and Jens can go to work from here to Lisbon. So we stay here, and since Maja does not sail, I can go away for a short visit home. I leave Sunday afternoon (April 23) and return on Thursday evening (April 27). I am glad to see children, grandchildren, and sister.



The “new” Sesimbra

We ride and walk to the end of the beach. This part of Sesimbra is newer and more touristy, hotels and apartment blocks. We go home, eat lunch and then I take a nap. Good swimming, a few waves but I cling to Jens and then we get the rented car. Jens comes back with both bikes and I drive the car. We arrive almost at the same time because I have a lot of one-way streets and Jens can follow the promenade along the beach. Tomorrow, Jens will go to work in Lisbon by car.



Jens ride with the two bikes. Photo taken from the car I am driving

Saturday, April 22, 2017. Sesimbra



The party



There is a wedding's meal at the marina restaurant

Second laundry, ride to town and swimming, then relax today also, reading the newspapers then we are invited to the party on the quay. Nice, the four Germans did well, a lot of good food and drinks. We can't eat nor drink too much because we are invited this evening at Fernando's place, Jens' colleague, in Setúbal. We leave by car at 5.30 pm and pass through the Parque Natural da Arrábida, a large park between Sesimbra and Setúbal. We admire the beautiful view over the sea and descend, by a road so steep and narrow that the alternating traffic is regulated by a red light, to Portinho, a pretty bay.



Portinho Bay

We arrive at Fernando and Ana Cristina at 7:10 pm. Very good dinner, shells, baked lamb, good cheeses and a lemon mousse for dessert, accompanied, of course, by good Portuguese wines. I don't drink, I'll drive.



Jens, Ana Cristina



Jeannette, Fernando

Fernando explains to us that Portugal is now governed by socialists, with the help of the communists, a far-left party and a pro-animal party. And this coalition is working and yet these parties are not known for their ability to cooperate. Interesting. We go back, getting lost seriously, taking a motorway that takes us in the wrong direction for 25 km. Finally, we arrive at Sesimbra at 0:30 am.

Sunday, April 23, 2017. Skogvik. Norway

Jens takes me to the airport at 12:30 and I'm well ahead of my plane. I buy many "pastel de nata", the good Portuguese small cake and two small toys for Theo and Kian, there is an excellent toy shop at Lisbon airport. Travel without problem and arrival in Amsterdam at 7:50 pm, just before the closing of the polling stations in France. I am looking for a screen, a TV and I find one: in the VIP lounge (very important people), they have a large television. Of course, I can't get in, but we see the screen from the outside, and at 8:03 pm, I hear that it will be Macron-Le Pen in the second round. Rapid flight from Amsterdam to Bergen, where we land at 11 pm under a snow storm. Catherine, my sister, is waiting for me, many thanks to her.



Our garden. Skogvik. 24.03.2017

The blog will take a short break and start again on Friday or Saturday.

See you soon

Friday, April 28, 2017. Sesimbra-Cascais



Bye, bye Sesimbra

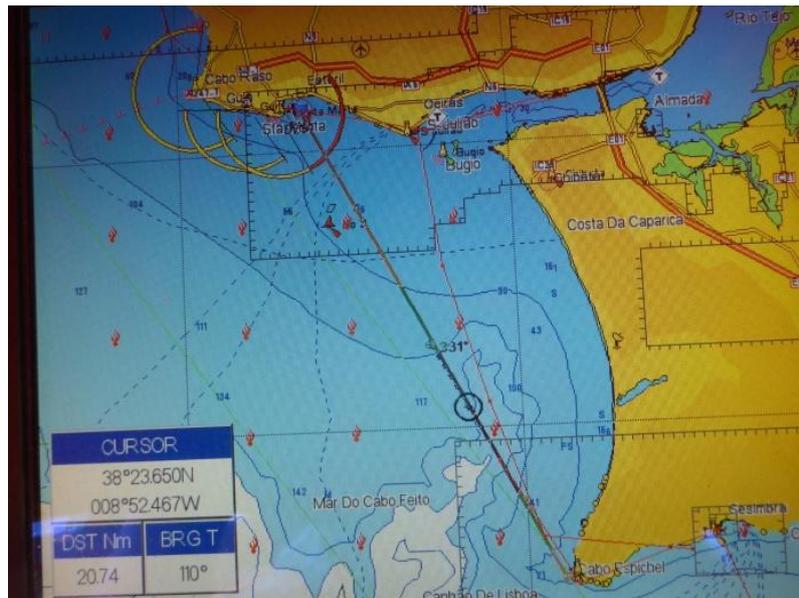
Well back last night after a short but very good stay at home. Jens drives the rental car back and puts his folded bicycle in the trunk and I join him in Sesimbra. Last small tour in town, we buy bread and two newspapers. The weather forecast is good, south-easterly wind at the beginning of the day then turning north but not strong, so we leave at 11:45 am. It's nice weather, calm sea.



Cabo Espichel, seen from south



and seen from north



Sesimbra-Cascais

We pass Cabo Espichel, a high austere cape which was a place of pilgrimage in the past. We went by bike there in 2014, a rough ride, I remember. The wind, after the cape, becomes more east and we have it on the side. We go, as usual, with the jib and the engine and that's fine. We also feel the swell now, a long one-meter swell, no problem. We eat the lunch en route then I take a nap and fall asleep. The wind falls and then rises from the north, facing us, but forces 3-4. We pass in front of the estuary of the Tagus and see, in the distance, the bridge 25 do Abril in Lisbon, this bridge we found so noisy when we were at the Alcantara marina in October 2014.



The bridge 25 do Abril, over there

Then we arrive in Cascais at 4:45 pm. We take diesel, we register and the secretary finds us in her archives, so the inscription is fast. We go to our pontoon then, after the ankerdram, walk to the town. I do not remember much of Cascais, we only stayed one night at the end of September 2014 and left around noon the next day. Cascais was the summer residence of the king of Portugal and is chic with large residences, often transformed into hotels now.



Cascais

Sesimbra-Cascais: 25 nm (45 km)

Florvåg-Cascais: $8\ 117 + 25 = 8\ 142$ nm (14 655 km)

Saturday, April 29, 2017. Cascais

I ride around the marina looking for blues, our key opens only our pontoon, but find only one then Jens goes shopping while I do the blog. He finds all we need to make a Danish lunch, sweet herring, "leverpostej" (pâté, but in fact it's a French pâté) and "rødbetter" (red beets), salmon, black bread ... Jens makes also champignons cooked with cream, as we do with chanterelles at home. We have guests at lunch, Dina, a colleague of Jens at the Institute and her husband, Felipe. We thought this would be new to them, but in fact they have already traveled to Scandinavia and they know it.



Our guests, Felipe and Dina

We spend a good time together, and they brought "pasteis de Belém", the pasteis de nata original, it's really good. After their departure, and to burn calories, we go cycling west along the coast. It's Sunday and a lot of people walk around, a number also with rented bikes, there's a "vélib" system here. A few kilometers to the west of Cascais, a very popular place is called "Boca do Inferno", it is a hole made by the sea and a kind of deep canyon.



Boca do Inferno

We continue on the bike path and see the Cabo da Roca in the distance, the westernmost cape of Europe, which we will pass by boat when we leave. At a certain place, the moor is all pink with flowers. Of course, I go to see it and I'm surprised, it's covered with a garden plant. How did it come her? Then we go back by an inland road and come home after 20 km. The dinner is light, the rest of the mushrooms and a yogurt.



It's all pink. They are pelargoniums!

Sunday, April 30, 2017. Cascais

The wind blew well last night, I stood up to add a rope, but it was not necessary, the wind was pushing us against the pontoon. This morning, it's gray, windy and cool. Jens puts the stove on. We have breakfast inside. I stitch the flag, it is really badly made, sewn with a fine thread of nylon that slips and does not hold. It's a bit a question of balance. Jens works with seismology.



Jens is working and I sew (again) the flag

A large Canadian catamaran has a drone that flies over the marina. A Dane, Søren, comes to see us and we invite them to "frokost". Frokost, in Danish means lunch but in Norwegian it means breakfast, you have to know what you are talking about. They now have their daughter, their son-in-law and two children with them, but the young people are going to town, only Søren and Astrid are coming. They are a little older than us and travel a bit like us, taking their time. They left their boat twice ashore in a small shipyard on the Vilaine in France, a little before Redon and went through Holland coming down.



Søren and Astrid

Good “frokost” and we are immediately on the same wavelength, it's nice. After the dishes, we pedal along the coast to the east. Lots of people, but not many on the beach, it's windy and the sun often hides behind the clouds. We bathe very quickly, the water is at 16 °, it's a bit cold. We stay here tomorrow, the wind is OK but at sea a swell of 4 m is predicted, it is too much for us. It's strange, in the marina the water is all calm, not a wrinkle, but the boats move forward and back constantly because of the swell.



The Ciudadela. Under: the beach





A small plane does acrobatics

Monday, May 1, 2017. Cascais

Calm, little wind but still a high swell, 4 m offshore. Our German neighbor "Tao" leaves anyway. They also go north and the captain says they try and if it's too hard, they go to Lisbon. We work a little, Jens and I, then we go to visit Søren and Astrid and get to know the whole family. The 6-year-old boy is playing with Lego and the 3-year-old girl smiles a lot.



Nice ride

And now is our departure for a great bike ride, we try to go to Cabo da Roca, but it's 21 km, we'll see. So we take the same way as we did the day before yesterday and continue west. The road is nice, shady, and rises all the time but reasonably. Lots of traffic, cars, taxis and buses. We climb, climb and have to go down to the lighthouse. There, we are not alone ... All Cascais is here at Cabo da Roca. We hear many different languages and the many buses have trouble parking. We lunch in the grass and return by a less frequented road and, in fact, shorter and faster. In all, we did 39 km. To refresh us, we go to the beach, much more crowded than yesterday, sunbathing and sea bathing, 16.5 ° today. Then Jens goes to pay the marina, puts the bikes on Maja, we leave tomorrow. Dinner at the boat, then we are invited for dessert (pancakes) on Wicky, Søren and Astrid's boat. The young couple went to dine in town

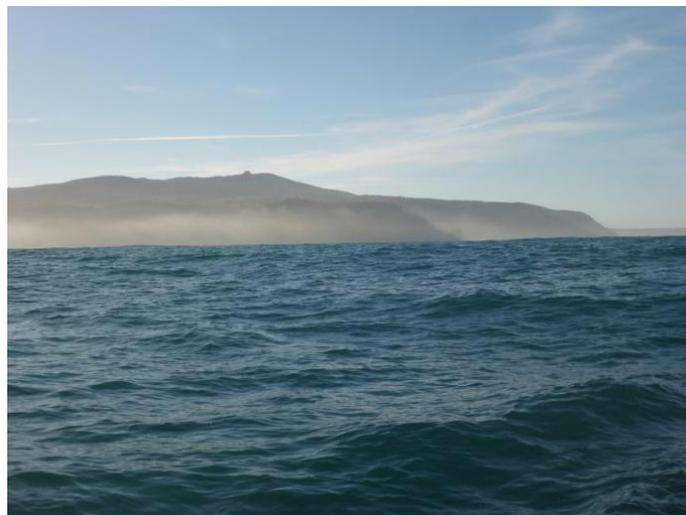
and the grandparents are looking after the children, who are already in bed when we arrive. We talk about many things. They went to Norway by boat and spent several days in Strusshamn, on our island Askøy.



Cabo da Roca

Tuesday, May 2, 2017. Cascais-Peniche

We leave at 6:15 am, early morning the wind is often still weak and rises later. The swell is about 2 m and we have to get used to it. At first, we don't feel very well, but after a few hours we become accustomed with it. Jens does the first nap, he didn't sleep well last night, then it's my turn and Jens takes a second nap. We're not very hungry.



The “mist” is created by the swell rolling when it arrives at the coast

Little wind to the Cabo da Roca where we turn north; it rises a little after, from the north but, to compensate, the swell is a little lower, 1.5 m. In the early afternoon, we don't go fast with everything against us, wind, waves and swell. The waves are formed by the wind here but the swell comes from very far, bad weather that may have occurred several hundred kilometers away. Jens puts more power and tests the engine. He thought the engine was heating but it was the thermometer that showed too much. In fact it goes well: we pass the waves better and, in addition, we're going to arrive faster. We go at 5.5 knots (9.9 km / h!). Great news: I see gannets, these magnificent birds.



Gannets



Against, again



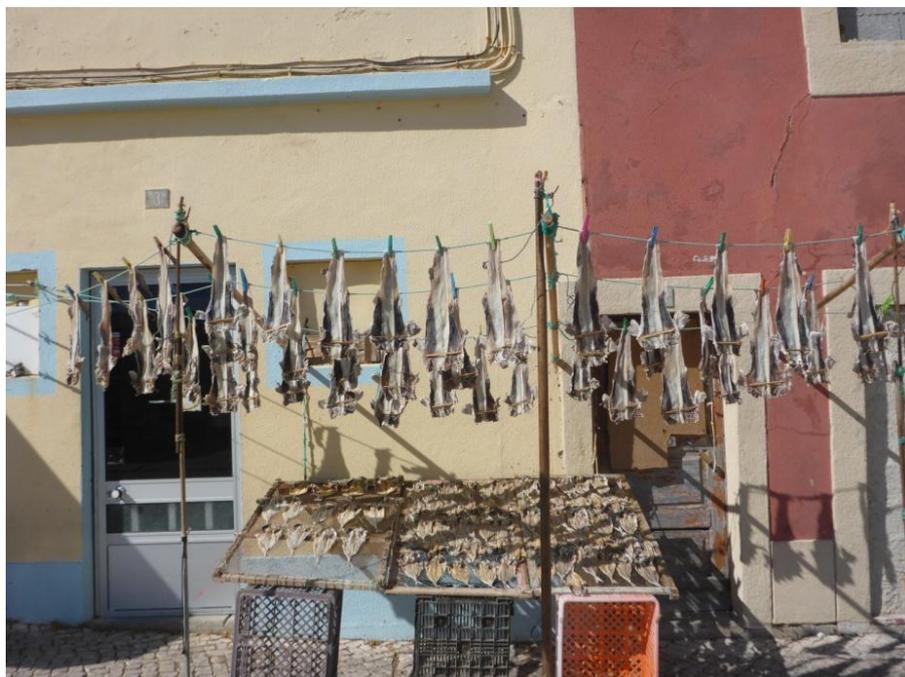
Swell. Photo taken at the same spot

We arrive at Peniche at 4 pm. Peniche is a big fishing port, well protected and where one can enter almost in all weather. Several ports on the Portuguese coast are not like that, they "close" when the swell rolls at the port entrance, it is then too dangerous to enter. A small marina is reserved for local boats but has a long pontoon for visitors. We are lucky, we can get inside, where we feel less the waves that fishing boats do when coming out and going home. The limit is 3 knots in the port, a large sign recalls it at the entrance, but the fishermen don't respect it. Ankerdram then Jens goes to the office to register us, the guy is nice and

finds us, for once, in the computer. Short walk in town, early dinner in the sun and walk on the pier after dinner.



Maja. Peniche



Drying fish

Cascais-Peniche: 45 nm (81 km)

Florvåg-Peniche: $8\ 142 + 45 = 8\ 187$ nm (14 736 km)

Wednesday, May 3, 2017. Peniche

Very quiet, we slept well. I'd like to take advantage of the quiet weather and leave, but Jens says the wind will be south tomorrow, better for us, although the swell will be a little bigger. So we stay and go cycling. Before, we have the visit of the "policia maritima" which requests Maja's papers and ours. Very friendly, no problem. Peniche was once an island, surrounded by ramparts, but it has sanded itself and is now a peninsula.



We can go down in a hole

High cliffs and the swell that rolls when arriving ashore. At one place, a ladder makes it possible to go down in a hole from where one has a beautiful view. We go to the lighthouse of Cabo Carvoeiro.



View of the lighthouse and the sea



Average soup but beautiful view



Berlenga Island

It is lunch time and a restaurant on the cliff near the lighthouse has a magnificent view over the sea and the island of Berlenga, where we had spent an epic night between the 29th and 30th of September 2014. We had to take up the tender on Maja, in the middle of the night by a strong wind, and it was more like a rodeo than anything else. We take a fish soup, average, but the view is stunning. We return to Peniche and Jens speaks with our neighbor, a young Polish guy who takes paid hosts on his 48-foot yacht, Crystal. He plans to leave directly for La Coruña and this gives Jens some ideas. Then it will go north, Scillies Islands, Hebrides, Orkneys, Scotland, Norway, Svalbard, Jan Mayen and Greenland. Very friendly and a super-sailor. In Peniche, small birds live in the marina. A man gives them crushed crackers and he puts a bowl of water for them, they are brown and white with the red legs. It is decided, we leave tomorrow and if all goes well, we will make a long leg, we must take advantage of the announced south wind.



Jens is talking with our Polish neighbor



The birds on the pontoon

Thirsday, Mai 4, 2017. Peniche-?

We left Peniche this morning at 6:30 am, it's now 7:30 am, good weather forecast, south wind (rather seldom) for three days. We take advantage of it and, if everything goes well, hope to make a long leg.

So no blog today and tomorrow.

See you soon



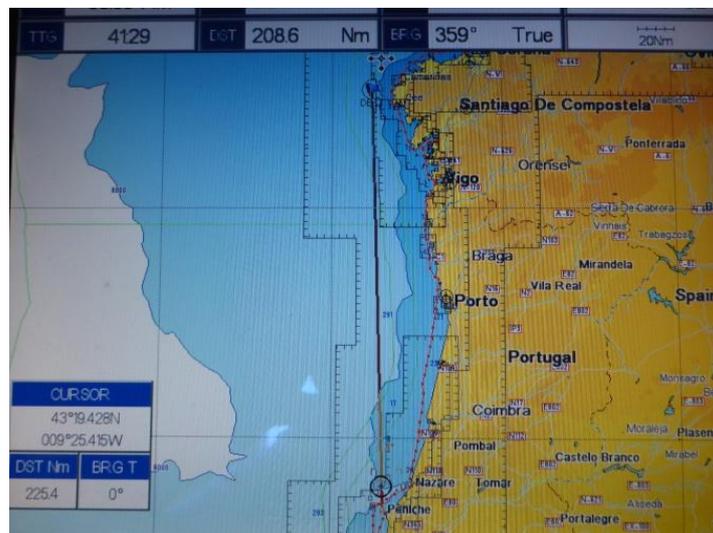
Thursday, May 4 to Saturday, May 6, 2017. Peniche (Portugal)-La Coruña (Spain)

We leave at 6.30 am in calm weather, gray, light east wind and moderate swell. At 7:30, I send a message that there will be no blog, not today nor tomorrow and that we hope to go as far as La Coruña. We take a nap in turn.



Cabo Carboeiro

We pass the Cabo Carboeiro and go far enough at sea and then straight north. At 4:30 pm, we pass Figueira da Foz, a port where we thought we would go before deciding to make a long leg.



Way point right north, at 41,29 hours and 208,6 nm (approximately)

Then the wind rises from west. At 10:30 pm, the autopilot breaks down and Jens can't repair it, there are waves, he should take out the bikes out and work the head down in the trunk, impossible. So we have to steer by hand all the time. Fortunately, the night of May 4 to May 5 is calm but with a torrential rain at times. We see nothing. We change every two hours, but I can't sleep, I sleep about 1 hour.



Waves and rain



Still with us



The waves are becoming bigger. Thursday 4, in the evening



Still 26,34 hours and 159,1 nm to go. Thursday evening



Night between Thursday and Friday. Everything OK

On Friday 5, the wind increases, force 5 then 6 and the waves become three meters quickly. We are sailing, jib and mainsail. At around 10 am, I'm lying down when a violent gust of wind comes. In two minutes, it goes up to 17 m / s, Force 7 +. Jens has to go outside to reduce the sails so I have to steer. I have to use all my strength to get the wheel to turn and make Maja rise a little in the wind. The waves seem enormous and the wind is violent, I'm afraid. Jens succeeds in reducing the mainsail and in rolling the jib in part. Fortunately, this gust of wind doesn't last. But it's going to be like that all day: wind force 5-6 and even a long period of force 7 (but Jens will tell me that afterwards!) and violent but short gusts of wind. Jeannette is out of order. I'm scared, I am shaking, I'm cold and yet I understand that Maja and Jens are

all right. Maja take incredibly well the waves coming from $\frac{3}{4}$ back and Jens is calm. He steers eight hours in a row. I have bad conscience (in addition) but can't function. I take a Sturgeon, an anti-seasick pill that must relax me and make me sleep but it doesn't work. Jens nibbles a bit, not me. The movements of the boat are very important but not violent; Maja goes up, down, rolls, stands up and starts again. In the afternoon, the corner at the bottom of the jib is detached, the shackle has opened. Jens puts his harness on and ties it up and I steer a little bit.



Jens goes out to close the shackle



A cleat is torn from the mast

While he is in front, he realizes that a cleat where a rope passes which allows the mainsail to roll away from the mast is torn out. In the evening, the wind calms a little, it is still force 5-6 but the sudden gusts of wind don't occur anymore. I take the helm at around 11 pm and I am fine. Jens can sleep a bit. At one point, a sea pack arrives on the left side of Maja and water comes in through the non-watertight windows. Also, when Maja is heeling, water that is in the

bilge rises under the floor and moistens the carpet. The night of Friday 5 to Saturday 6 May is going well. On Saturday morning, the westerly wind turns south (at least) and drops to force 4 and the waves are decreasing as well. When it is my turn to take the wheel again in the morning, I forget that we must steer. I sit down and just look, it's only after a few minutes that I realize that Maja, left to herself, goes in the wrong direction. We are very tired, steering all the time and sleeping too little are using people.



Saturday morning, we are close now to La Coruña

Saturday morning, we make tea and eat knekkebrød, it seems good. Since this morning, we are sailing parallel with a yacht called "Bel Ami".



Maja. Photoes taken by Martin on "Bel Ami" Saturday morning

We had met a Bel Ami between Barcelona and Menorca, but it is not the same one. This Bel Ami goes in the same direction as us. We arrive at La Coruña at 3 pm on Saturday and shortly after, Bel Ami arrives too. Our ankerdram is a good coffee and then we take a walk in town, a very beautiful city. Jens then talks with the crew of Bel Ami, an Austrian couple. He, Martin, made beautiful pictures of Maja with a powerful zoom. Thanks, Martin for the pictures. Few photos from this crossing, I was not feeling too well and it was really moving. We are tired and a little proud, it was a tough crossing.



La Torre de Hercules. La Coruña



I hoist the Spanish courtesy flag



Peniche-La Coruña

Peniche-La Coruna: 289 nm (520 km). 56,30 hours
Florvåg-La Coruna: $8\ 187 + 289 = 8\ 476$ nm (15 256 km)

Sunday, May 7, 2017. La Coruña

We slept very well, like babies from 11 pm to 8 am, we had much to catch up. This morning, cleaning, drying and repairs. There are, for example, two cm of water in the closet down where we have the vegetables and the drinks.



Jens is bailing out the closet

The carpet is wet and we dry it with paper towels. Jens then changes the autopilot engine, he has one, of course, in reserve (and will order a new reserve one now) and I sew the flag that suffered badly during this crossing.



I sew the flaf



Jens changes the auto-pilot motor

We're so busy that we don't see a big cruise ship coming. We look up and here she is. We also do a laundry. Jens goes to talk with Martin and Antonia, the Austrian couple on "Bel Ami" and invite them to lunch.



Martin and Antonia. "Bel Ami"

We still have herring from our Danish lunch the other day and, coincidentally, Martin is half Swedish by his mother. He spent all his childhood holidays in Sweden with his grandparents and keeps good memories of that time. They are also heading north and want to go to Norway this summer. We sympathize well despite the difference in age, they are much younger than us. The men speak a lot of motor and technique and Antonia and I talk like old friends. A nice lunch. They leave and I start the long blog of the turbulent crossing Peniche-La Coruña. We have another visit, Åge, a Norwegian from Trondheim. Jens and he discuss and take a glass of wine, but I stay down to "work".



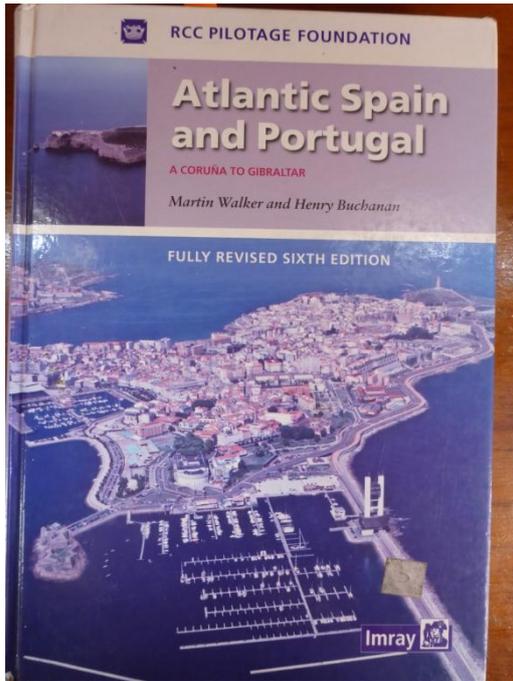
Åge

At 8 pm, I see quickly "Le Monde" to get the results of the elections. Good luck, Emmanuel. We take a piece of bread and cheese and I continue the blog, I finish at 10:30 pm, some news on Internet then to bed.

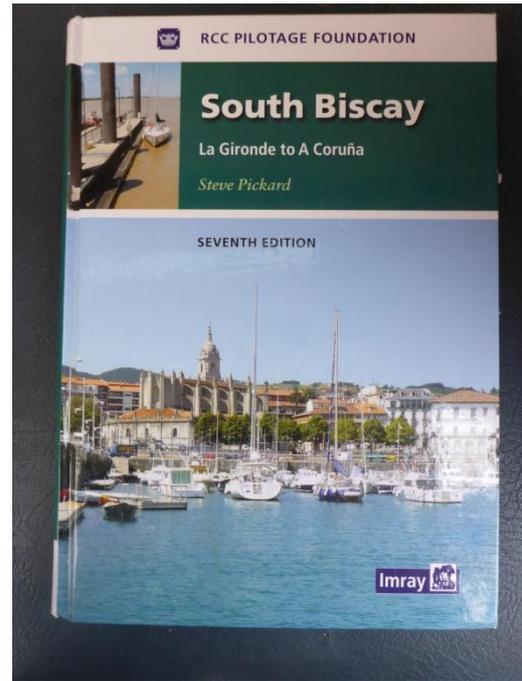
Monday, May 8, 2017. La Coruña



La Coruña



We are finished with this one. Cover: La Coruña



Now it is this one



The tower on the jetty

We're not nervous today either. Jens goes to buy parts for the boat and I want to have a photo printed. Now, I'll tell you how it went: I go to a photographer with the photo I want to print on a USB stick. I know where it is on the key but the photographer puts my key in a machine that looks for all the photos of the key ... and there are 12 000 !! The machine works for at least a quarter of an hour, people wait and all for nothing. When the machine has finished checking the 12,000 photos, of course, the one we want is the last one. OK. I pay 2 € 50, get a receipt and get the photo printed in another local in another street, at least at 300 m. All this to print a picture! Lunch on the boat, newspaper and sudoku, I have not done one for a long time. I start the blog early enough, we are invited as well as Åge by Martin and Antonia to dine on Bel Ami.



Antonia, Martin



Åge



Martin, Jens



Jens, Jeannette

Very friendly and very good dinner. The conversation goes from episodes of bad weather to exchanges of good places to anchor through technical problems on boats and, important subjects, anchors and pumps (which tend to break down). The "black waters" problems (euphemism to speak of the shit, excuse me the expression) are many. Åge and Jens discover that they both know the same persons, he worked in the oil industry and had contacts with geologists and seismologists at the University of Bergen. Martin and Antonia tell us about their sailors' theoretical formation in Austria and their discovery of real sailing in Croatia. A very good evening. We come back at midnight, but we have not far to walk, only the distance between two pontoons.

Tuesday, May 9, 2017. La Coruña

Gray, not very beautiful weather today. We take breakfast inside, read the newspapers a bit and take a bike tour, it's time to get back to it. A bike path goes all around the city and we take it. La Coruña is made up of a peninsula attached to the land. We make a long tour, pass the Torre de Hercules, the aquarium, the great beach and continue. We are almost in the countryside but to return, we cut directly at the shortest, between the peninsula and the land. A good ride of 17 km. In our marina, a yacht has a flag that I have never seen before, so I ask them where they come from. Oh dear! They have a long way to go home. Lunch, newspapers, small ride for me to the other marina to look for blues, which I don't find, then blog, shopping for Jens and early dinner. Small, small walk after dinner under an umbrella. We leave

tomorrow first a little north and then east, we will follow the northern coast of Spain and then go up along western France.



Good bike path and path



Flowers and sea



Hello



The unknown flag: Hong Kong!

Wednesday, May 10, 2017. La Coruña-Cedeira

It rained last night and it is gray this morning. We want to leave but the marina office doesn't open before 10 am so we have to wait a little. Martin, from "Bel Ami" is also waiting to leave. When coming out of the port, we cross a replica of one of Christopher Columbus' boats, bearing the Portuguese flag.



A Christopher Columbus boat replica

Little wind and moderate swell. At noon we hear a boat "Taras" calling "Bel Ami" but this one does not answer. We see them both on AIS, they are a little behind us. We pass the Cap Prior and turn a little more east.



Cape Prior



It is green



Cedeira

The landscape is wild and green, we could be in Scotland or Norway. It also rains intermittently. We had thought to go as far as Santa Marta de Ortigueira, a port on a river which can only be navigated at high tide. But we should have to hurry and we give it up, we go to anchor in a “fjord”, Cedeira, which is nearer. We arrive at 3:30 pm, a good short day of sailing. We try to anchor twice and the anchor does not catch, it is only at the third attempt that we succeed. Shortly after us, a yacht arrives, "Paras". Passing by us, they show us an enormous bundle of ropes that they got in the propeller. Then "Bel Ami" arrives. We go ashore with the dinghy and, passing by her, I told them that "Taras" had called them.



An old friend



The dinghy at the pontoon. Cedeira

Cedeira is a small and quiet town, but it must be lively in summer, and the many cafés and restaurants are proof of this. I want a fish soup, so we go to restaurant. It is 7:30 pm and the cook has just lit her stoves, no one is eating so early here. They don't have soup but many good fish and pulps. We dine like kings, pulp, monkfish and salad, a good white wine and good bread, what more can we wish. We take the rest of the white wine and bread home. We go with the annex and pass by "Bel Ami". Martin tells us that "Taras" called them to ask if

they could tow them when they had the rope in the propeller, "Bel Ami" being the boat closest to them. But Martin did not hear the message, their radio was set too low. The guy from "Taras" had, by chance, all the equipment to dive and managed to remove the rope. Rowers are training with a long boat and the coach is shouting without stop, I think he will have a sore throat tomorrow.



Maja. Cedeira



La Coruña-Cedeira

La Coruña-Cedeira: 25 nm (45 km)

Florvåg-Cedeira: $8\,476 + 25 = 8\,501$ nm (15 302 km)



We take home wine and bread from the restaurant

Thursday, May 11, 2017. Cedeira-Cariño

Very well slept at anchor. This morning it is gray, dark and the rain threatens. "Bel Ami" leaves first at 9 am, they come to say goodbye. I hope we meet again, maybe in Norway. Then "Taras" begins to pull up her anchor but the anchor takes up a big mess of fishing net.



Taras takes up a big mess of fishing nets



Jens goes to help



The harbor. Cedeira

The guy goes into his dinghy trying to cut it but it's not easy. Jens goes in with the tender to offer him a saw, but when he arrives the guy managed to unhook the net. I make pictures of the scene. Bad luck, "Taras" have had a bundle of ropes in the propeller yesterday and a net in the anchor today. We stay in the boat a little, it is raining, and I send pictures to Klaus and Monica (Sesimbra). The rain stops and we walk a little towards the port and the fjord's entrance. We go back to Maja and raise the anchor, without taking anything with it, by chance. The weather is dark, alternating rain and short periods of sunshine.



It's raining ...



... but we are comfortable in the dog-house

The wind is also irregular with south-west gusts and a bit of swell. We lunch en route and then take a nice cup of tea when it begins to rain, well dry in our doghouse. The real sailors are outside, in rain clothes, wet and cold. We pass Cape Candelaria, with small islets like needles. Jens would like to pass between the land and the islets, but not today by this wind and waves. A military ship does it, but I only see it when she has already passed and can't make a picture. We are approaching our destination, the port with the pretty name of Cariño (affection). The guide says that a small marina is open to visitors in the harbor, but only for shallow boats, there is hardly any water when the tide is low.



The small islets like needles



Arrival at Cariño

We go there, see a free place, and we dock under a pouring rain. I have a rain jacket on but my pants are soaked. We want to walk out of the pontoon but the gate is closed. Two men arrive and tell us that indeed there were some places for visitors before, but that now it is all private. They advise us to go to a big dock, with the fishing boats. So we move to the big dock, which is very high. I do not know how, but I manage to climb to the quay, on all fours, but I get there. We are lucky, the tide goes down and a little later, I could not have done it. We have to tie Maja with longlines, the tide is three meters here. The fishing boat just behind us leaves and Jens asks them if we can take their place, there is a ladder there. No problem. Without a ladder, we could only get out of the boat at high tide. I do the blog, Jens makes dinner and we eat outside, it doesn't rain anymore.



Maja. And the sea is still going down

A guy admires Maja from the top of the dock and offers us "percebes", those funny shells that we tasted in Sesimbra. We let ourselves convinced and we buy 1,5 kg for 30 €. We'll eat them tomorrow. Small walk after dinner, Cariño is a small quiet city, too quiet but well maintained and quite pretty. When we come back, Maja is even lower, all the way down.

Cedeira-Cariño: 16 nm (29 km)

Florvåg-Cariño: $8\ 501 + 16 = 8\ 517$ nm (15 330 km)

Friday, May 12, 2017. Cariño-Viveiro

The weather is not nice, gray and rainy. The shock has been brutal between Peniche, Portugal, where we were on the beach sunbathing and now Galicia where it rains a lot and where it is cool. Jens puts on a little heating in the morning. In addition, while down the dock as we are, it's dark in the boat.



Maja,down and Jens up

I send some photos to "Taras" of the net episode yesterday, Jens works then we go into town. Cariño had, in the past, many fish canneries but all of them are closed now. It's quiet, quiet. I buy a birthday card for our grandson, who will be 6 years old at the end of the month. We sit down at a cafe to write it and I send it from the post office. We buy a few things, good bread and fish "empanadas", it will be our lunch. On returning to the boat, a camping car registered in England stops to talk to us. The guy was born here in Cariño, but immigrated to the UK many years ago. He tells us that Cariño was a rich city but that there is not much work here now. We eat our empanadas, very good, then leave, it is 1:20 pm.



Relax today



Jens wants to pass between the island and land

We pass between the island and land

Little wind, from the northwest and small waves. We make many stops on the way, we have time and this area is interesting with many small ports, anchorages or marinas. It's quiet today, Jens takes a nap and then when he awakes, I start the blog. It rains when we get to Viveiro and I have to put the two pieces of my rain clothes, jacket and pants. The marina is a bit upstream from a ria and it looks like we are going up a river. Friendly welcome, it is a woman who comes to help us to moor Maja. It is 5 pm, a very quiet day of sailing.



Viveiro. The marina is marked with a red cross



Viveiro. Main square

Ankerdram then walk in town which seems quite important and old. A Swedish yacht is two places from us. Jens offers them some "percebes" (goose barnacles), they taste them ... and bring them back, they don't like them. We propose them to a Frenchman and he says yes, but tomorrow they are having dinner right now. We eat a good portion each, Jens and I, it's good but not to the point of paying them a fortune.

Carinio-Viveiro: 18 nm (32 km)

Florvåg-Viveiro: $8\ 517 + 18 = 8\ 535$ nm (15 363 km)



Percebes

Saturday, May 13, 2017. Viveiro



Viveiro



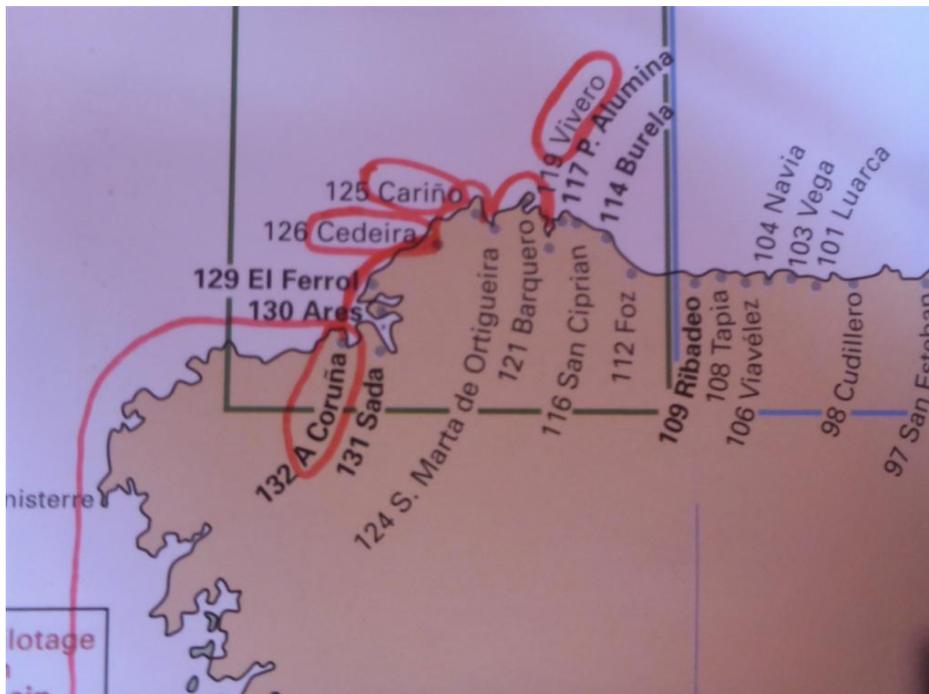
The ria at low water

Variable weather, not cold but very windy, it's good that we are in a port. We walk a little this morning, go to the bridge and cross the estuary. It is a large expanse of water but at low tide there is not much water. We go shopping, we invited our French neighbors to come and help us eat the "percebes" at lunch. They come and, by chance, like them. They knew what it was but had never eaten them. I had made a salad and with pastry cakes, it makes us a good lunch. Patrick and Brigitte invite us to drink coffee on their "Blue Bay". This is the first time we go on one of my blues, I am moved (well, I find it a little funny).



Brigitte and Patrick

We advise each other of the places we have loved, they between here and South Brittany (and in particular the French islands, Ile de Ré, Ile d'Oleron, Ile d'Yeu etc) and we, along the Atlantic coast Spain and Portugal. They go south and think of crossing the Atlantic next year. Jens and I go for walk to the fishing port to burn all those calories. Our dinner is light, beetroot salad and cheese. The wind is still very strong, but, as expected, it calms down around 8 pm, and this is good because we are planning to leave tomorrow.



La Coruña-Viveiro

Cariño-Viveiro : 18 nm (32 km)

Florvåg-Viveiro : $8\ 517 + 18 = 8\ 535$ nm (15 363 km)

Sunday, May 14, 2017. Viveiro-Ribadeo

We say goodbye to Patrick and Brigitte and we wish each other good wind. We also speak a little with a couple of Swedes (not those of the percebes, another couple). They look nice, but it will be a brief encounter, they go south and we head north. The neighboring boat, "Fisheye", French, leaves at 8 am. We leave at 9.45 am, in very calm weather.



It could be in Norway

We can read and I even do a sudoku. We pass Cape Roncadoira with a lighthouse and a good hiking trail that we see from the sea. At one point, during my watch, I am looking while doing my sudoku, I see a white line on the sea in front of us, as if a wave is rolling. We check well on the map, there is no shoal, no rock, nothing. There is no reason for this to happen here. But in fact, it's foam.



It's foam



Calm



Jens catches a fly, but it escaped

Jens tries to feed our spider. He caught a fly in a glass but at the last moment the fly manages to escape. In the early afternoon, the wind turns and increases, it is right in the nose, but it's OK, the waves did not have time to form.



We motor, the wind is against us

The Ria de Ribadeo, where we are going, is wide, but we see the opening only at the last moment. Everything is well marked and when we see the big bridge, we can go but we have to go under the arch on the right, otherwise there is not enough water (at low tide).



The marina is just after the bridge

The marina is just after the bridge and a marinero awaits us, Jens phoned. And it's good, because the current turns Maja and she is not easy to control, the current pushes Maja's stern (the back) of the pontoon. The marinero takes a rope at the front, ties it fast, I quickly throw him the back rope and he pulls, it's OK, it is 4:10 pm. Our neighbor is "Fisheye" who arrived before us. Ankerdram, city tour. Ribadeo appears to be a large city, but is not, only 10,000 inhabitants. Blog then dinner of good spaghetti. After dinner I go on the Internet to see Macron's investiture, it's not every day that we have a new president.

Viveiro-Ribadeo: 30 nm (54 km)

Florvåg-Ribadeo: $8\ 535 + 30 = 8\ 565$ nm (15 417 km)

Monday, May 15, 2017. Ribadeo

Nice weather. We go shopping, but not together. Jens goes to rent a car, he has spotted, on the Internet, the only rental company here in Ribadeo. They should meet at the bus station. Jens goes there, sees a guy who drinks a coffee in the cafeteria and asks where is the car rental. The guy answers: "It's me." He makes the papers in the cafeteria, but it looks okay. Me, meanwhile, I'm going to buy pants. First in a real shop, but it is not at all my style (very tight, with holes ...) nor my size. So I go to a Chinese and find what I want. I also buy a small pressure cooker. Lunch on the boat and very pleasant bike ride along the coast.



The ria entrance



This lighthouse is now a hotel

We go west so this is the coast we passed yesterday by boat. It is beautiful, it's sunny and I find many flowers. Blog of yesterday. Jens fetches the car and goes shopping. Then he uses the pressure cooker by making a delicious beef with carrots. We rent a car because we are going tomorrow to Porto, Portugal, to see our good friends from Mexico, Krishna and Clara who are visiting this city now.



Coast with many flowers

Tuesday 16 th and Wednesday 17 th of May 2017. Porto (by car)



Green landscape

We leave by car from Ribadeo at 9:10 and take the highway all the way. Very beautiful landscapes of mountains, forests, it is green and sparsely populated. We go to La Coruña, Santiago de Compostela, Vigo and then cross the border of Portugal without realizing it. We eat bread and pâté on a rest area on the highway and arrive in Porto where Bjorg (our Danish GPS) takes us directly to the "hostal" which surprises us with its comfort and its location in the city center.



The hostal is down town

A "hostal" is cheaper than a hotel. At 3 pm we find Krishna and Clara at a terrace. We have not seen each other since November 2014 in Rome. We are glad to meet again and take a drink to celebrate. Then we are tourists in Porto, it's nice, hot, the city is beautiful. We pass the metal bridge, walk a little and taste a glass of port, of course. We play tourists again, from here to there and it is soon time for dinner. Good dinner of octopus, sardines and fish. The conversation is going well, we have so much to tell each other. Krishna and Jens finish the

meal with a CRF, a good Portuguese brandy and then we go home. They rent a Rbnb at 500 m from us.



This book store appears in a Harry Potter film. There is a queue of toyrists in front



Jens, Krishna, Clara



The bridge and the Douro



We taste porto, of course



The four of us, at dinner

The next day, May 17, we think of all, family and friends in Norway: it is the national day there and in addition, the family celebrates Theo's birthday, 6 years. We are wholeheartedly with them.



Porto

After a nice breakfast in a refectory-style dining room, we join Krishna and Clara who have not had breakfast, so we have a coffee with them. Then walk again and lunch at 1 pm, good and not too copious. They come back with us to the car park where we have the car and we bid farewell. We take the road again, first highway then small roads.



I drive and Jens is navigator. We cross a beautiful but very sparsely populated area, we see many abandoned houses and deserted villages. We are driving, driving, we had thought to sleep on the road, but it begins to rain and we decide to go home, on Maja, to Ribadeo. We arrive at 10 pm, in the rain. Åge, the Norwegian that we had seen in La Coruña arrived in Ribadeo with his "Frilæns III". A good cup of tea and in bed.



A stork's nest



Beautiful flowers on the road side



Fog

Thursday, May 18, 2017. Ribadeo



Maja. Ribadeo

We talk a little with Åge, the Norwegian and then we drive to the east to see the coast, we have the car one more day.



Old house



Tapia

It's green and this is understandable, it rains a lot. We will see the small ports where we will pass when we leave. The first, Tapia, has a narrow entrance, practicable only in calm weather and there is hardly any room. The second, Navia, is a little upstream a river barred by a sand bank where the swell rolls. We see a dredger that is dragging.



Viavelez. The harbor entrance, and it is a calm day ...

And the third one, Viavelez, is pretty and picturesque but the entrance looks very difficult. Even today, where the weather is calm, unpleasant waves enter the harbor. And to think that the fishermen, in the old days, came out and came back in these small ports, sailing and rowing. There is swell almost all the time, and ports like these are impracticable as soon as the swell rolls. At Viavelez, a little taverna on the harbor is open, it is half-past twelve and we go there. The lady tells us we can eat but not before 1pm. We take a drink while waiting, and it comes accompanied by "pinchos", kinds of mini-tapas. We have a choice of a piece of bread with a small piece of omelet (tortilla española) or a small piece of bread with chorizo. Jens asks what is simmering in a large pot in the kitchen. It is a stew of white beans with octopus. We take a second glass that comes with a small cup of this stew. It's so good, we want more. We share "una ración" and have difficulty to finish it, it is so much, and it is only a half-portion.



It's very good!

We return, in the rain, passing through a fourth port, Figueras, opposite Ribadeo, on the other side of the bridge. It is very small, little water at low tide, but an important shipyard is active and a large Danish vessel is under construction there.



Figueras

Friday, May 19, 2017. Ribadeo-Gijón

It's cold. Jens plugged in a wire on land and we plug on the electric heater under the table. He'll return the car's keys by bike, he had already driven the car to the bus station yesterday, then he pays the marina. We leave at 9:20 am. The forecast is for a two-meter swell and at first wind from the south, turning west and then northwest during the day, force 3-5. And that will be right. So a lot of movements for Maja. I take a long nap, we can't do anything, and I don't feel very well. We eat a light lunch, I'm not hungry. After lunch, Jens takes a nap and I'm in charge. The autopilot makes us do great zigs-zags, I stop it and I steer manually. First it makes us go more straight and second it keeps me busy. I don't look at the waves coming from $\frac{3}{4}$ rear and which are a little too big for my taste, I look ahead and concentrate me on directing Maja towards a cape that we must pass.



Swell. The photo is taken at the same place



Swell

Then Jens comes up and I go back to bed. A little seasickness surprises me, it's been a long time since the last time. We pass the port of Cudillero where we thought we would stop, but we are progressing well and we can arrive in Gijón just before nightfall, so we continue. Before the port of Gijón, several ships are anchored and are waiting. One of them is called "Hav Pike", it is Norwegian (or Danish or Swedish) and means "The Girl of the Sea". The last half hour seems a bit long. It feels like the waves are bigger here than elsewhere, maybe they are bouncing on the big jetty? Even the big ships are moving up and down, then imagine little Maja.



Even the big ships are moving, so Maja ...

It seems good to pass behind the jetty, finally quiet. We arrive at 9:45, just before nightfall. The "Fisheye" lady comes to help us to moor. A cup of tea and a knekkebrød finish this long and a little turbulent day.



The jetty is imposing



Ribadeo-Gijón

Ribadeo-Gijón: 66 nm (119 km)

Florvåg-Gijón: $8\ 565 + 66 = 8\ 631$ nm (15 535 km)

Saturday, May 20, 2017. Gijón

At 9 am I phone Theo to wish him a Happy Birthday, it is today that he is 6 years. We take our time, take a long breakfast. Jens has two packages that arrived here: a new engine for the autopilot (to have in reserve) and a new radio. He starts installing the new radio. We take also advantage of the big washing machine (8 kg) to do a laundry and then we leave to discover

Gijón by bike. A long promenade follows the bay. It's Saturday, a lot of people are walking around, the weather is nice.



Gijón



What a nice car! (We have the same)



Playa San Lorenzo

We go a little west and then back east. A peninsula, site of the ancient city, separates the bay and there is a beach on each side. The largest and most frequented is the west beach, Playa San Lorenzo. A lot of people on the beach, and yet it is not that hot, many surfers too. We go back and eat our lunch. Yesterday, Jens had a mail from Juan, a colleague working in Oviedo (20 km from Gijón). We invited them for lunch, him, his wife and their two-month-old baby. But there is a misunderstanding. Juan spoke yesterday of "mañana" (so today). But Jens read the mail today and understood tomorrow, so Sunday. At 1:30 pm, he phones us, they are nearby and asks how to find the boat. Jens quickly puts away his tools, I quickly tidy the boat. They're coming in and it's going very well.



Juan, Virginia (2 months) and Susanna

They are a bit sorry, but we find it's funny. I make a salad, Jens makes an omelet, we have cheese and that's it. We are delighted to have such a small baby visiting. Their little girl is cute, calm, suckles well and sleeps. Susanna and I talk a lot about baby, between a young mother and a grandmother, that goes without saying. It is decided that Jens will visit the institute of Oviedo tomorrow and that I will go with him. We can get there by train. After their departure, I make the double blog of the 18 and the 19 of May. Light dinner and walk on the promenade. It seems that the whole city is there, to walk in one direction and then go back in the other direction, and for them it is before dinner, people dine late here. Young people gathered in front of a cafe near the harbor and I think it is a "botellón", as there was in Almuñecar in 2000-2001. Young people gather to drink. But for now, it's quiet.



Monument made of bottles

Sunday, May 21, 2017. Gijón



Sea front with good bike path

I take a shower and wash my hair, we do a laundry (sheets, towels ...), we read the newspaper and we leave by bike at around 11:30. We follow the promenade east, but farther than the other day. It's Sunday, the weather is good, and a lot of people are walking. We leave the city, go a little in the countryside and return by a chic district of the city: big houses, gardens like parks and high fences everywhere with alarms. We return to the sea and, being a little thirsty (sic), take two claras on the terrace of a cafe, which, by chance, also has "churros con chocolate". So, after our two claras (each) accompanied by pinchos (a few fried potatoes and two rings of squid) I take a churro con chocolate, Jens takes a coffee. I know, it's very "usunt" (Norwegian for "unhealthy"), but it's good.



Churros con chocolate

By taking my bike afterwards, I realize that the wheel of my bike is punctured. We park the bikes, go to the beach, sunbath, whole sea bath for Jens and half (up to the waist) for me then Jens repairs my bike. He has done that since he was 12, so he's an expert. We are back at Maja at 3 pm, we had a good portion of fresh air, as our father would have said.



Monday, May 22, 2017. Oviedo (by train)



We take the train

Expedition today, we take the train to Oviedo, 24 km. The train station is quite far so we go by bike and chain them well. We just learned, again, the theft of a folding bike from a fellow navigator. But ours don't tempt thieves, they are 7 years old, have a lot of km and are rusty. At the station, we are perplexed; there are two companies, two tickets windows, two schedules, two railway systems. We ask the first ticket office for a stop in the Oviedo station closest to the institute (there are two stops in Oviedo), but the lady sends us to the other wicket, her company doesn't serve this station. And she can't tell us the schedules of the other company! So we take a ticket to the main station in Oviedo and will walk, it's not that far. The train crosses a pretty green and hilly countryside. It's too bad, it's gray, misty and cool.



Oviedo

We arrive in Oviedo 35 minutes later. Jens has the GPS and we find the institute without problem. I leave him to "work" and I walk, first in a well-kept park where some flowers are named. I then go to the "Casco Historico", the old town. Oviedo is the capital of Asturia,

although smaller than Gijón and a city with a very old history. But it is also a modern and dynamic city.



Jens is going to work at the Institute of Geology



The park



Oviedo

After a good walk, I go to a café to take a "cortado" (coffee with a little bit of milk), a cake and a newspaper. But the cake is not a cake, it's filled with meat, but it's good. Jeg koser meg (I'm happy).



Jeg koser meg

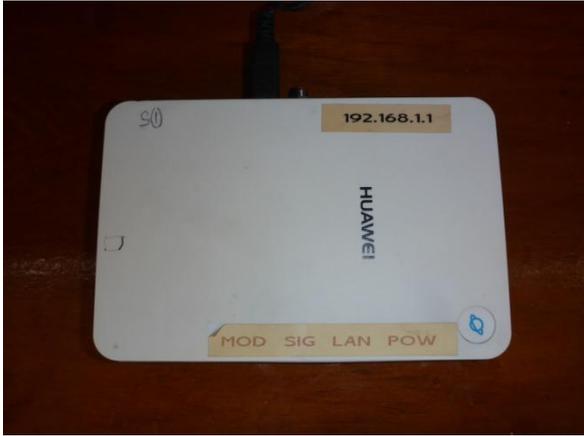
I go, walk again, the weather is nice now, and meet Jens and his colleagues at 1:30 pm at the institute. They invite us to lunch at a nearby restaurant, we are eight. We eat well, and after the meal, I take the train back to Gijón and Jens stays to work with them, he'll come back later.



Modern Oviedo under the sun

Tuesday, May 23, 2017. Gijón

We still stay here in Gijón for two reasons: we are waiting for package and the wind is from east, so not good for us who are going east. Several boats leave, but they go west, towards La Coruña. We were eleven yachts that night, ten French and us. The package we are expecting is a new Chinese. I have to explain: the system that allows us to receive the Internet is called "China Unicom", which we call the Chinese. When Jens asks me to plug in, for example, he tells me to "put on the Chinese". Good. This Chinese runs with 3G, which is a bit slow. So Jens ordered a new system that works with 4G, faster. This new system will continue to be called the Chinese, it is easier.



The old Chinese



The new Chinese

We take our time and then go for a ride, this time to the west, but we have to bypass the port which is huge.



Do you remember, Nina, Laila and Kristin? There was the same in Mantes-la-Jolie



It's steep, we are thirsty ... The little café

We then climb up a hill, and it is steep, and we arrive at a small village which has a beautiful view on the port. It is very small but there is a cafe where we take two claras. Several men are taking a drink at the counter.



Unexpected meeting

We continue to climb and, a bit in the middle of nowhere, a restaurant has a full parking, a good sign. It is 2 pm ... we are tempted. The "menú del día" is at 8 € 50. It is copious and good.



The restaurant "A Caldeira"

And we go back downhill. Jens goes to the marina office and the package has arrived. He begins to install it, we dine and he finishes after dinner. With the new Chinese, it takes me much less time to put the photos in the blog. Small digestive walk and quiet evening. We are both reading the Chinese series (again China!) by Peter May, Jens is reading the last one, the sixth and I am only at the second one. We can recommend it.

Wednesday, May 24, 2017. Gijón

Nice weather but strong east wind, so we'll stay here today, in Gijón. Riding, we have already gone east along the coast on Sunday and then westward yesterday now we want to go south (to the north it's the sea). We ride around town for a while without wanting to, trying to find

the countryside. First we arrive on a motorway, and by bike it is not recommended. U-turn, but then we are stopped by the railway tracks but we find, after a while, a footbridge.



Two companies, two systems and two track widths



Now we are in the countryside



A mini scarecrow

Finally, we are in the countryside and there, it is steep. At 1.30 pm, by chance, we pass a restaurant, although we had thought of returning to eat lunch on the boat ... Menu at 8 € 50, all included, and it's good and friendly.



How can we resist?



Monument to an abandoned mine

Our neighbors at the next table are truckers, it reminds me of the truckers restaurants in France. Jens thus lengthens the ride to burn more calories. We are back at around 3:30 pm, after 24 km. Relax, then blog for me and shopping for Jens. He finds a courtesy flag of the Basque country, since we will pass there. Light dinner, a little walk along the quay where we look at the waves, to see what awaits us, we leave tomorrow.

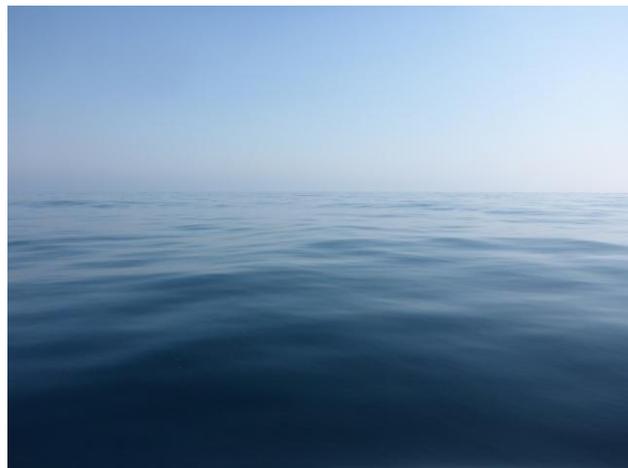
Thursday, May 25, 2017. Gijón-Ribadesella

Nice weather, quiet. Jens rides to buy fresh bread and newspapers. Then we take diesel and leave at 9.20, the sea is flat, no wind at all, so we motor. At 10 am, a message on the radio: the Spanish Navy will test shooting. They give the position, and, relief, it's much more to the

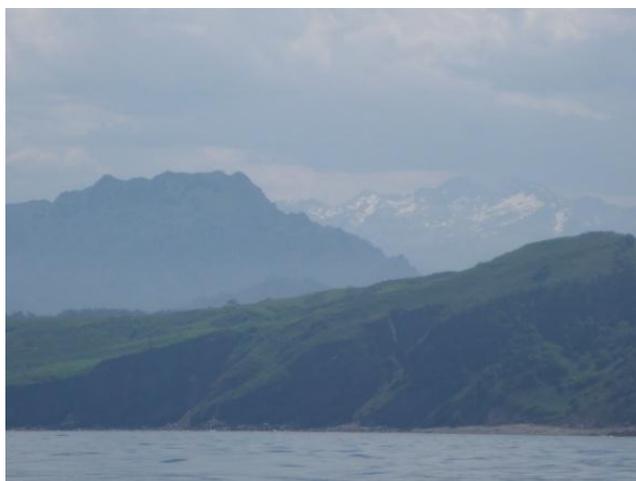
west. The sea is flat but there is a small swell that makes our dear Maja roll well, we can't do much. The newspapers remain where they are, we shall read them later. We see snowy mountains, the Pico de Europa, over 2000 m.



Our spider is eating a fly



Calm



Snowy Pico de Europa

We arrive at the port of Ribasella at 3.20 pm. It is a ria where there are large sandbanks. We have to follow a channel.



We have to be close to the wall, on the right there is a sandbank



First docking: at the stone quay



Second docking: at the pontoon

We go to a large stone dock marked for visitors. A French sailboat is already there, near a ladder, of course. When the sea is low, we can't get out of the boat without a ladder, the boat is 3 m down. The other ladder is blocked by a small fishing boat. Jens talks with a fisherman who advises him to go to the pontoon outside the private marina, across the harbor. We move there getting around the sandbank. There, two Frenchmen ask us to leave a place for a friend who will arrive. His yacht needs 2 m of water, we only need 1.4 m. And the bottom goes up at the end of the pontoon, but there is enough water for us. Jens then backs Maja, which is not easy with the current. But with the help of the "broum-broum" (the bowtruster), it goes very well. It's much better here, it's a floating pontoon, no need for long ropes to descend 3 m. But the marina gate is closed, one can neither go out nor of course return. One of the French, when someone passes by, puts a wedge under the door.



The current brings seaweeds and branches



The old submerged jetty



We moved from 1 to 2

The current brings plenty of algae and branches that come to rest between Maja and the pontoon, we even have a tree trunk. When the tide drops, there appears an old jetty covered in seaweeds that is completely submerged at high tide. We don't go ashore, just 2 minutes on the bridge to make a picture and keeping an eye on the wedge under the door. It's just for one night so it's okay. I walk on the pontoons looking for blues and find two.

Gijón-Ribadesella: 30 nm (54 km)

Florvåg-Ribadesella: $8\ 631 + 30 = 8\ 661$ nm (15589 km)

Friday, May 26, 2017. Ribadesella-Santander

We leave Ribadesella at 8.20 am, pushed by the current, the tide is falling. The sea is calm, with little wind. Beautiful view of the snow-capped mountains. Jens can read and I do a sudoku, but that's just, we have to stop after a while. We are sailing with a little help of the engine, the wind is $\frac{3}{4}$ rear, weak. We take a nap in turn and then eat lunch. Right after, around 1:30 pm, the sky becomes black, it begins to rain very strongly and we have gusts of strong wind.



Snowy mountains



The gust is coming



Jens can even trim the main sail from inside

We stop the engine and have good speed only with the sails. The autopilot is also stopped, the wind is irregular and the pilot reacts too slowly to the gusts, it is better to steer by hand. It does not last, half an hour, but the wind remains force 3 after that. In the afternoon, the sky clears, but at 6 pm when we approach Santander, it starts again, this time with lightning and thunder. We have too much sail and in the gusts, Maja wants to go up in the wind, which we don't want.



Second gust. We must reduce the jib

Jens rolls the jib a bit and it gets better. The wind has risen to force 6 and even 7 in the gusts and the waves are quite big (dixit Jeannette, according to Jens they are not so big). A military ship that is about 500 m from us slows down and stays close to us for 10-15 mn. We both think he's making sure we're fine, and then he's gone. Nice. We can't thank him, like all the military ships he does not appear on AIS. She "sees" us but we can't see her on the screen, so that the enemies can't see them.

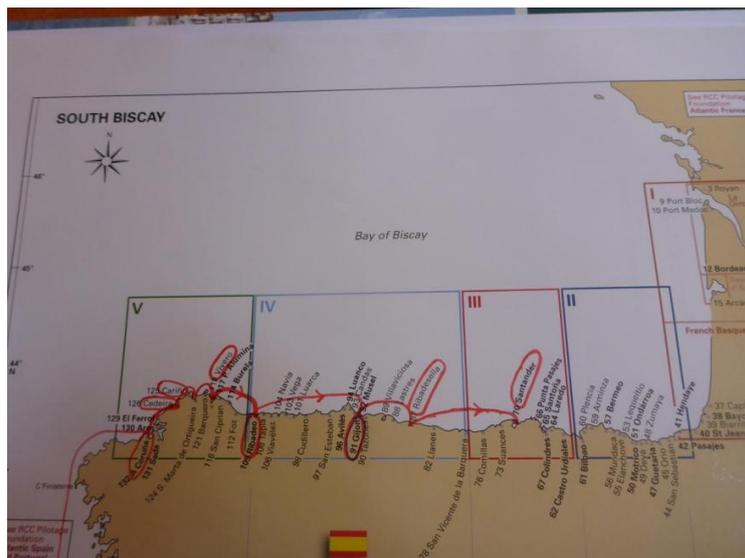


After the lighthouse, we will be in Santander Bay and it will be calmer



It looks like an Indian profile

This gust of wind lasts longer than the first one and we arrive in Santander in a pouring rain, we must put on our rain clothes. The first marina is private but we try anyway, otherwise we have to go to the second one, several km up the river. We go to a free place and a Madame Securitas arrives right away, no, we can't stay here, the place is private. We plead our cause, it's late, the weather is bad, we are tired ... She agrees to phone the president of the club who accepts us for one night but in another place. Phew! No problem, we move. Happy to have arrived, it is 8:20 pm, it took us exactly 12 hours. The rain stops and we can dine outside, who would have believed it, and go for a short walk. Jens looked at the weather forecast for the next few days and it seems that Sunday, Monday and Tuesday would be fine for us to go to France. To be continued ...



Ribadesella-Santander

Ribadesella-Santander: 62 nm (112 km)

Florvåg-Santander: 8 661 + 62 = 8 723 nm (15 701 km)

Saturday 27 May 2017. Santander



Jens uses the satellite phone to resolve the phone problem

We slept well, it is quiet in the marina. I start the first blog (the Thursday one) while Jens reads, at least, the newspapers bought in Gijón two days ago. Then he wants to look at the weather forecast and finds that we have no more phone or Internet. He changed the form of subscription last week and, fearing that this would not be well understood, asked for it to be confirmed by email, that there would be no break. One Call, the company, sent an email confirming that. But there must have been a problem of communication inside the company and they cut everything off. We are almost “incomunicados”, but we still have the satellite phone. Jens tries to phone the girls but it takes time before someone takes the phone. Nina answers and Jens explains the situation. She calls One Call who acknowledges their mistake and immediately reopens Jens' phone. But they don't reopen mine, Jens calls them and finally, everything is arranged. Jens spent all morning with this Internet problem and I on the blog, we need fresh air, so we go for a walk in town and go shopping.



Maja. Santander



Santander marina



The sailing school is active. There is even a Laser from Portugal 18 **9063**

The weather is not very good, sunny periods and showers. The sailing school is active today, Saturday. We lunch outside on Maja and, after lunch, we find that the toilets are blocked.

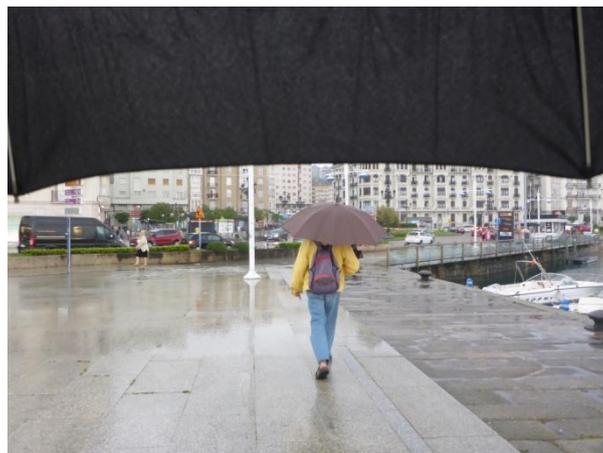


A shitty job

Jens takes out his toolbox and does a shitty job, in the proper sense (!) of the word. I'm doing the second blog, the Friday one. Walk in town and last claras in Spain, we leave tomorrow. We agree that we have worked well today and that we deserve a dinner at a restaurant, and even more because it's our last night in Spain.



The boy in shorts is a real boy



We walk to the restaurant under umbrellas

We go in the rain at a seafront restaurant, quite popular, but by 8:15 pm, people don't dine, it's way too early, they take an aperitif or a coffee. It's incredibly noisy and yet it's not full. I believe that in Norway, the labor law would oblige the owner to better soundproof the hall, the poor people working here must all become deaf sooner or later.

Saturday, May 27, 2017. Santander-?

We are leaving tomorrow for France, about 200 nautical miles, so no blog during two or three days. Good weather forecast. To follow in the next book. See you soon.





Florvåg-Santander

In green: Roses-Santander

