



Cruises
through Europe
on a Linssen yacht



Everything you can do with and experience on a Linssen yacht



Linssen customers sail their yachts all across Europe. Read interesting stories about what they did on their travels. Join them and get to know the pleasures of boating or gain inspiration for your own future trips. Whether you intend to cruise on inland waterways, rivers and canals through Burgundy in France, Friesland in the Netherlands, the extensive waterways around Berlin or along the coastline or travel longer distances, for example across the North sea, Mediterranean, Baltic or Adriatic, you can do it on your Linssen yacht.

These articles have been published in the Linssen Magazine.
This magazine is sent to Linssen owners and fans twice a year.

The Linssen Family

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After a good twenty years sailing on Lake Constance, we now want to get to know Europe via its numerous waterways. After a test sailing on the inland waterways in and around Berlin and a visit to the Maasbracht boatyard, which impressed us with its modern production technologies, in 2003 we decided to place an order for the construction of a new Linssen Dutch Sturdy 320 AC. This yacht is suitable for the conditions on Lake Constance and for more extended sailing trips throughout Europe.



Lake Constance — Vienna — Paris (Part 1)

We know Europe from the motorway. Now we're exploring it from the water.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS SABINE AND WOLFGANG RÖSEL

Its dimensions allow us to find a mooring in most marinas. Its draft allows us to sail on most canals and its shortened mast, which provides a clearance of 3.45 m, allows us to pass under almost all French canal bridges, a few exceptions aside. And what's more, it's a very beautiful boat! For two summers we tested out our Linssen (which we named ZINFANDEL) on Lake Constance. We arranged for the expert and experienced Linssen boatyard owned by Monika and Fredy Blust (with whom we've since become good friends) in the town of Romanshorn in Switzerland to make a few technical adjustments to make the yacht properly fit for inland waterways. The rest of the time we spent engrossed

Grand Canal d'Alsace/Imperial Cathedrals

In 2006, the Wednesday after Easter, our ZINFANDEL was transported to Basel on the Rhine by low loader. Crane weight 12 tonnes. It took us three days to prepare for the trip, stock up on provisions, etc.

From km 170 on the Rhine, we sailed via the Grand Canal d'Alsace first to Breisach and then via the Colmar Canal to Colmar, the capital of the département of Haut-Rhin and after that via the Grand Canal d'Alsace and from Rhinau via the Canal du Rhône au Rhin Nord to Strasbourg. We sailed back to Germany from km 352 on the Upper Rhine.

Speyer, Worms and Mainz, the three cities with German Imperial Cathedrals (Kaiserdome) on the Upper Rhine. The history of Worms is marked by a heavy bombing raid in February 1945, a few weeks before the end of the Second World War. This bombing raid devastated almost the whole city. After Worms, the journey continued through the green river landscape. We then passed through the busy industrial area of Mannheim and Ludwigshafen until we again reached the quiet reed beds of the old branches of the Rhine, where we found pleasant moorings. We moored for a few days in Rüdeshaim harbour at km 525 on the Rhine. We then continued upstream at a speed of approximately 8 km per hour. Our boat, a displacement yacht, has an engine speed of about 2,200 rpm and travels at a speed of 13.5 km per hour against the current. However, we had reached a speed of 20 km per hour when travelling downstream.

High water/Götz von Berlichingen

We continued towards the river Neckar. We made a stopover in the Lampertheimer Altrhein nature reserve and then went on to the Neckar. In Heidelberg we were greeted by castle illuminations and fireworks. The impressive castle



"...Picturesque view: Sulzfeld am Main..."

in the Rhine Atlas, innumerable travel guides and navigation charts.

with its castle garden was once an important meeting place for Europe's rulers. However, the castle and its gardens were destroyed by General Mélac in 1689 on the orders of Louis XIV. Now all that remains is a few romantic ruins.

We continued upstream to Zwingenberg. Rain, wind, cold. We were driven along by the fast rising water. The high water was getting ever closer. The water level on the Neckar exceeded the 2.6 m limit. Out of sheer necessity, we sought a mooring just above the Rockenau lock. All shipping on the Neckar was stopped because of the high water. A few Rhine barges were moored beside us. When the ban on shipping was lifted, we were sailing against a maximum 7 km current (very rare, it's normally only 1 km/hr) upstream to Hassmersheim, the historic "bargees' village" on the Neckar. The shipping museum contains a lot of information on the history of shipping on the Neckar. We paid a visit to the town of Homburg mentioned in Goethe's historical play *Götz von Berlichingen*.

On to Heilbronn, once one of the most important trading ports along the Neckar from Mannheim. The old town was completely destroyed by allied bombing during the last months of the war in 1944. Marbach, the birthplace of Friedrich Schiller, contains the new museum of modern art. At Plochingen, km 201.5, we reached the end of the

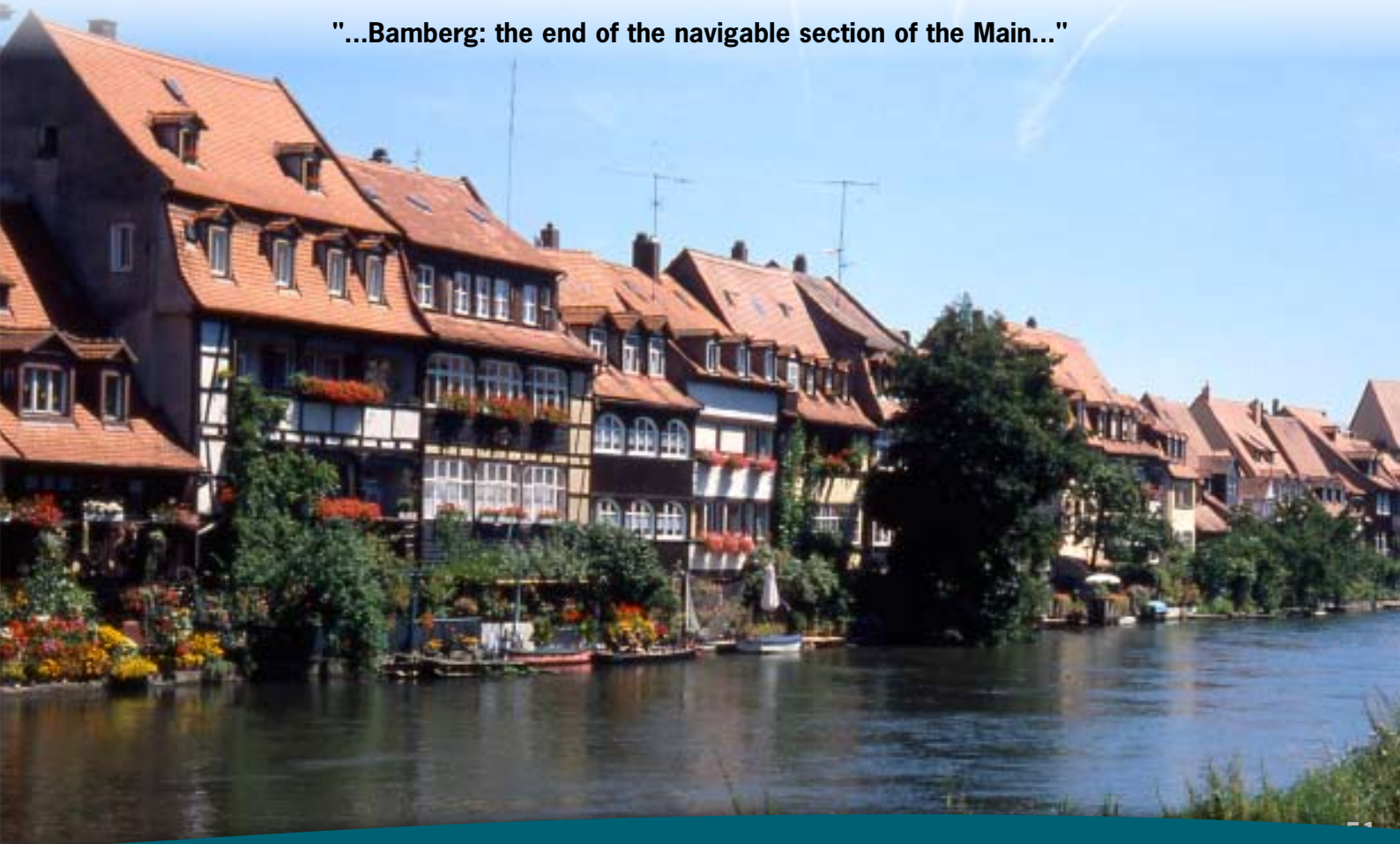
navigable part of the Neckar. We reached this point on 10 June 2006. We gave a salute: the cork of a bottle of Sekt from Geldermann in Breisach, which until that moment had spent the journey cooling down below, popped and shot into the air.

The journey then continued downstream to Mannheim and then upstream again on the Rhine and, opposite Mainz at the Mainspitz, we entered the River Main. We headed for the marina of the Miltenberg Yacht Club, where we had reserved a mooring. The yacht club has a brand new club house, which has protection against flooding. In addition, the technical service was excellent and the marina provided a fantastic view of the old town and castle. We stayed there for four weeks. During our stay there was a tremendous storm one July evening. The fall winds that blew from Odenwald into the Main valley were so strong that it created white-crested waves against the current.

After Lohr and Würzburg, we reached the end of the navigable section of the Main at Bamberg.

All the towns in the Main valley that we visited for longer or shorter periods provided a rich diversity of valuable culture. Mediaeval town walls with imposing towers, Baroque churches, Gothic chapels, impressive town halls, magnificent country estates, extensive parks and Mediaeval

"...Bamberg: the end of the navigable section of the Main..."



half-timbered houses. Innumerable other monuments and museums showed that this region has a troubled but, at the same time, prosperous past. Many places had beautiful art collections to be admired.

Main-Danube Canal/Ludwig-Danube-Main Canal/Fossa Carolina

The above canals are three hydraulic engineering structures built to create a navigable connection between the Rhine and the Danube. We sailed on to the Main-Danube Canal at Bamberg. This is suitable for vessels up to 2,500 tonnes. Until this canal was constructed, the Ludwig-Danube-Main Canal linked the two European rivers from 1846 until 1950, but it was only suitable for vessels up to 127 tonnes. In some places, the remains of this canal can still be seen. A masterpiece of hydraulic engineering from the Middle Ages is the Fossa Carolina (also known as Karlsgraben) near Weissenburg. This is where, in 970, Charlemagne attempted to build a ship canal between the two rivers by linking Altmühl and Rezat, something which was ultimately never achieved.

In Forchheim and Nuremberg we stayed a little longer to

"...Römertor Carnuntum..."



get a picture of the way these two towns developed. Since 1846, the two towns have had a shipping link and as a result have undergone substantial industrial development. After Nuremberg, the present Main-Danube Canal leaves the route of its predecessor and only resumes it again from Berching, where it flows into the picturesque valley of the river Altmühl at Dietfurt and from there onwards to Kelheim. We made a stop in Berching and in Beilngries and cycled through the fields in the beautiful sunshine. Of course, we paused for regular gastronomic breaks, as after all we were in Bavaria – beer country.

In Kehlheim, where the Danube and Altmühl meet, we celebrated the end of the first year of our Euro-tour in Bavaria's oldest Weissbier (a type of wheat beer) brewery. The ZINFANDEL spent the winter in the winter lay-up facilities at the Saal marina on the Danube.

2006 Tour

<i>Towns and cities:</i>	<i>Basel, Breisach, Colmar, Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Esslingen, Rüdelsheim, Wiesbaden-Schierstein, Miltenberg, Würzburg, Bamberg, Saal</i>
<i>Number of days on board:</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Number of km travelled:</i>	<i>1,843</i>
<i>Number of hours travelled:</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>Number of locks:</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Number of marinas/moorings:</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Quantity of diesel:</i>	<i>1,162 litres</i>

2007: Castra Regina/Castra Batava/Vindobona

Between Regensburg ("Castra Regina") and Deggendorf there is not a single marina for a stretch of about 90 km. We therefore spent the night at the waiting place for pleasure boats above the Straubling lock. Our journey took us past Deggendorf and Passau ("Castra Batava"), where we spent some time making excursions on shore. We then sailed on to Schlögen in Upper Austria, where the Danube winds its way through the countryside. We followed our route to Grein in the Strudengau region against a strong headwind and persistent rain. Grein castle contains a shipping museum. Because the Danube is currently controlled by weirs, the once dreaded narrow passages with the treacherous whirlpools and rocks in this bend in the Danube, have lost their danger.

We passed through the Nibelungengau and moored in the marina at Luberegg/Emmersdorf. From there we cycled to

“...Cochem on the Moselle...”



Stift Melk, the famous Benedictine monastery which is situated on the other side on the steep banks of the Danube. Before us was Wachau, which reminded us of the Middle Rhine Valley. This region has been granted 'UNESCO' world heritage status. On the way to Krems, Sabine noted that the journey between km 2035 and 2005 on the Danube had taken us precisely 88 minutes, despite the strong headwind. The ZINFANDEL operates at between 7.2 and 7.6 knots at 2,200 rpm, in sometimes very strong wave action in narrow and winding passages. But the Sturdy and its crew were not thrown off-balance.

After Krems and a short stay in Tulln, which was built on the site where the Roman castle "Comagenis" once stood, we found a berth in the Kuchelau marina near Vienna. We found ourselves in the foothills of the Austrian Limestone Alps, at the foot of the Leopoldberg mountain.

Vienna – Bratislava – Vienna/Carnuntum

Having soaked up the culture of Vienna ("Vindobona" in Celtic), capital of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire on the Danube, we proceeded to Bratislava, the historic city where Danube monarchs were crowned and the current capital of Slovakia.



"...Forchheim on the Main-Danube Canal..."

Bratislava's old town, at least the part of it that wasn't destroyed by various wars or the construction of infrastructure and housing blocks during the communist period, is a tourist attraction that draws in visitors from all over the world. We found a mooring in basin 4 at "Milan", the marina operator which is famous throughout Europe. We enjoyed "Nabucco" in the historic opera house and "Orfeo ed Euridice" in the old Philharmonia. Because of the strong current (9.13 km per hour), our return to Vienna took two

days and our diesel consumption doubled. Despite this, we were happy with the pace as the ZINFANDEL travelled steadily upstream with the Volvo engine purring quietly, occasionally overtaken by the hydrofoils that ply between Vienna and Bratislava. There was little cargo traffic and only a few sightseeing boats. We made a stopover near Orth in the flood plains of the Danube, where the wheel of a reconstructed historic Danube ship mill was turning.

We continued against the current to Vienna, where we moored in Vienna's new marina, not far from the Prater. We took the S-Bahn (suburban railway) to Carnuntum, a Roman castle near Petronell – once the largest and most important Roman army camp on the Danube. From there we sailed on up the Danube towards Krems. There, on a rise against the steep banks of the Danube, was the Benedictine monastery of Göttweg. This monastery is interesting because of the role it had during the Middle Ages.

Our 30 km trip upstream through Wachau to Melk took 5 hours. The same stretch only took us an hour and a half downstream. Speed: 6.03 km per hour. Passing via Grein and Au, we reached Linz, where we enjoyed not only the culture but also the famous Linzer Torte. It was high water, which made us decide to wait in the marina until the highest point was past. Using the current water levels on the Internet, it is easy to predict when the peak discharge will develop. While under way we saw a large tree, complete with roots, in the brown river water. Attached to the trunk by a chain was a half-submerged flatboat. It's this kind of floating debris that makes high water dangerous.

Muskatzen/One-metre bratwurst/Constantine the Great

We arrived back in the Main via the Main-Danube Canal (this time heading north).

The Wipfeld marina served as our base for a cycle trip to the "Maria in Vineyard" church and to Volkach. From Mainstockheim we cycled to Dettelbach, where the famous "Muskatzen" biscuits are baked. We also stopped off in the Mediaeval wine village of Sulzfeld as we didn't want to miss out on the famed "one-metre bratwurst". From Ochsenfurt we made a detour to the historic burial site in Mainbernheim. Culture days in Würzburg. Shipping museum in Würth. Back to the Rhine.

After a stop in Rüdeshheim, the journey continued across the Rhine: through the "Binger Loch" whirlpool, along the Loreley to St Goar and from there into the Lahn valley at Lahnstein. First to Bad Ems, where the Roman limes crossed the Lahn. There, on the border between the Taunus region and the Westerwald, the coolness of autumn was already perceptible. The thermal water of the former "Imperial and

Princely Spa” warmed us up again. We then continued on the Rhine to Ehrenbreitstein. There, at the foot of the imposing fortress, was the very interesting Rhine Museum, which provided a lot of information on the history of shipping on the Rhine. In Koblenz (the Romans called it “Confluentes”) we visited the Middle Rhine Museum.

We sailed round the “German Corner” (Deutsches Eck) and up the Moselle. After Brodenbach, Senheim, Traben-Trarbach and Bernkastel-Kues we reached Neumagen, which has been considered the oldest wine town in Germany since the discovery of the famous Roman gravestone showing a wine ship. Finally, we sailed into Schweich marina close to Trier. It was there that we brought the ZINFANDEL ashore to spend the winter with Linssen representative Kreuzsch. But not until we paid a visit to the German city of culture, Trier, which was built on the Roman foundations of “Augusta Treverorum”. The fantastic exhibition on “Constantine the Great” was the worthy conclusion of our second Euro-tour year. And again it was a day to be grateful.

(To be continued)

2007 Tour

Towns and cities: Saal, Passau, Vienna, Bratislava, Vienna, Deggendorf, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, St Goar, Koblenz, Bad Ems, Trier

<i>Number of days on board:</i>	168
<i>Number of km travelled:</i>	2,052
<i>Number of hours travelled:</i>	257
<i>Number of locks:</i>	111
<i>Number of marinas/moorings:</i>	57
<i>Quantity of diesel:</i>	1,603 litres



Sabine and Wolfgang Rösel. Both architects, have lived on the water during the summer since 2006. With their Linssen Dutch Sturdy 320 AC “ZINFANDEL”, they are making a Euro-tour to investigate evidence of cultural, social and technical developments on the rivers and canals of Europe.

Wolfgang Rösel is writing a book about the tour and the knowledge they acquired.

Over three years on the Lake Constance – Vienna – Paris route, they spent 417 days on board and covered 5,000 km. The engine ran for 766 hours and consumed 3,330 litres of diesel. They made for 150 marinas or moorings and passed through 692 locks.

Details of the rest of the route are to follow.



In the last edition of *Serious Pleasure*, you will have read about the first two stages of our journey on ZINFANDEL, our Linssen Dutch Sturdy 320. In 2006, we took her from Basel to Saal, a trip of over 1,800 kilometres. The second stage in 2007 went to Bratislava on the Danube and back again, after which we left Zinfandel safely in her winter accommodation at Linssen representative Kreuzsch on the Moselle in Schweich near Trier. Trier was the starting point for our last stage in 2008.



Lake Constance — Vienna — Paris (Part 2)

The trip from Trier to Paris

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS SABINE AND WOLFGANG RÖSEL

Moselle / Canal des Vosges / Saône

Until then we knew the German Moselle valley between Koblenz and Trier solely as a well trodden path full of bends between Hunsrück and Eifel and surrounded by forests and vines on steep slopes. The valley we were sailing through was now becoming wider. As far as the French border, we



"...Canal des Vosges..."

sailed past extensive vineyards on the sunny side of the tiered slopes. We made our first stop in Schwebsange. The price of diesel was very low there, so we filled our tank to the brim. We then sailed past Schengen at the point where Germany, France and Luxembourg meet. In Metz we found a fantastic mooring, right in the town centre. At this point, shipping uses the canalised Moselle which runs alongside the old, non-navigable river bed. We sailed past enormous dredgers which were being used for large-scale gravel extraction. We stayed around for a bit longer in Nancy, the former capital of Lorraine. The historic city made a great impression on us. In particular, the famous Stanislas square is very impressive. The old town of Toul, which was reinforced with ramparts and bulwarks by master builder Vauban in the 17th century, was our last stop on the Moselle before we reached Neuves-Maisons, the end of the navigable section of the river (392.8 kilometres from Koblenz). On our travels through the industrial area of Lorraine, we could see on all sides the signs of a steel industry which had fallen into disrepair.





"...Place Stanislas in Nancy..."

Canal des Vosges

We found our first mooring near the village of Richardménil on the Canal des Vosges. The trip rose to 360.57 metres above Normal Amsterdam Level. Countless former forges lay alongside the canal which was only completed between 1874 and 1882 and which took us through a forest landscape. We moored in the beautiful marina at Epinal, the town that used to be famous for its wallpaper and engravings. The Musée de l'Image has a collection of 23,000 engravings and woodcuts. These were referred to as the "predecessors of the comic book" and were printed there from 1796. The last stop along the Canal des Vosges was the newly built marina in Corre, where the Canal des Vosges meets the Saône.

Saône

The Saône, which starts off not much wider than a canal, becomes steadily wider and turns into a river which flows slowly through a wide open landscape which is interrupted

in places by dense riparian forests. We sailed into St. Jean de Losne where the Canal de Bourgogne begins. This is the largest "Port de Plaisance" on France's inland waterways. St. Jean de Losne is also an important selling place for used boats and péniches up to 38 m in length. The majority of the owners come from Switzerland, the UK, the US, New Zealand or Canada. We also met many sailing boats that were on their way to the Mediterranean with their masts lowered.

Canal de Bourgogne / Grand Crus

We stayed moored for some time at the quayside of the old harbour at Dijon and took time out to explore the museums and the old town thoroughly. We visited the mother house of the Cistercian Order in Citeaux and the Grand Cru vineyards around Nuits-Saint-George on the Côte d'Or. The numerous churches, convents, fortresses and castles – some of them very well maintained – which we passed ↵

"...fascinating city centre of Auxerre..."





“...One of the 189 locks on the Canal de Bourgogne...”

gave us a good impression of the lifestyle full of pomp and ceremony that the clergy and nobility enjoyed in the late Middle Ages.

Built between 1783 and 1833, the 242 km Canal de Bourgogne took us through a sometimes densely wooded mountain landscape to the watershed at a height of 378 m above Normal Amsterdam Level, after which sailed through the 3,333 metre long tunnel and moored in Pouilly-en-Auxois. The “Cap Canal” information centre provides a lot of information on the construction of the canal, now over 200 years ago. We had now “conquered” the three highest canals in Europe: as well as the Canal de Bourgogne the Canal des Vosges (360 metres above Normal Amsterdam Level) and the Main-Danube Canal (406 metres above Normal Amsterdam Level). Because of the 189 locks and the infrastructure which – unfortunately – is generally in poor condition, few boaters use the Canal de Bourgogne. And that’s a pity, particularly in view of the beautiful landscapes that we sailed through. On some days we didn’t encounter a single boat and sometimes three on one day. Our cooling water system became blocked due to the large quantity of water plants and rubbish floating around. Although we managed to clear the blockage ourselves, we also heard stories from other boaters who had much more serious faults.

Yonne / Canal du Nivernais / Train de bois

In Laroche-Migennes we reached the Yonne, on which we sailed upstream as far as Auxerre. We lingered here too because of the tranquillity exuded by the Mediaeval old town, Sainte-Félicité cathedral and the monastery of Saint Germain.

We left Auxerre and sailed up the Canal du Nivernais on which we could only sail as far as Clamecy because it was so shallow. Situated at the edge of the dense forests of Morvan, Clamecy was once a flourishing town thanks to its trade in firewood with Paris. In those days, Parisians burned one million cubic metres of wood per annum. This wood was transported downstream from Clamecy on floats (known as train de bois) on the Yonne. After 1850, the advent of coal and the railways put an end to this boom period.

Our journey continued downstream on the Yonne via Joigny to Sens. Sens is the birthplace of the famous architect William of Sens, who taught the monks in Canterbury, England, to build stable gothic arches.

Île de France

We left Burgundy and reached the region of Île-de-France. Safely moored at the jetty under an equestrian statue of Napoleon in Monteau, we experienced an unusually violent storm and high waves with foaming crests during a pitch black night. We continued our journey along the Seine to Paris. Having sailed through an extensive industrial area and some suburbs, we reached the city centre. After passing through the locks that took us from the Seine to the same level as the marina, we finally reached the Port de l’Arsenal at Place de la Bastille on ZINFANDEL.

We were in Paris!





Both architects Sabine and Wolfgang Rösel, have lived on the water during the summer since 2006. With their Linssen Dutch Sturdy 320 AC "ZINFANDEL", they are making a Euro-tour to investigate evidence of cultural, social and technical developments on the rivers and canals of Europe. Wolfgang Rösel is writing a book about the tour and the knowledge they acquired. Over three years on the Lake Constance – Vienna – Paris route, they spent 417 days on board and covered 5,000 km. The engine ran for 766 hours and consumed 3,330 litres of diesel. They made for 150 marinas or moorings and passed through 692 locks.

Tour 2008

Towns and cities:	Trier, Metz, Nancy, Corre, St. Jean de Losne, Dijon, Tonnere, Auxerre, Clamecy, Sens, Paris
Number of days on board:	100
Number of km travelled:	1,105
Number of hours travelled:	243
Number of locks:	433
Number of marinas/moorings:	61
Quantity of diesel:	565 litres



"...Destination: Port de l'Arsenal in Paris..."

Our cruise on board the Delfin, or how we spent two wonderful weeks on the Quiche Lorraine Tour. Starring Delfin, a charming Linssen Grand Sturdy 29.9, a co-starring the skipper and his lady companion. "Can you tie a bowline?" the skipper asked his nautical companion to be in February.



The Quiche Lorraine Tour with 'Delfin' (part 1)

Two canals, two rivers and three countries

Text and Photos Anette Leistenschneider and Ralf Deimel

So started the preparations for our two-week boating cruise from mid-June to the beginning of July 2009, setting off from the Saarbrücken Osthafen. Once the decision had been taken, the lady at the skipper's side started her preparations in earnest – in the following weeks every rope, cord or piece of string that came within reach was tied into a bowline. The ambition to be able to tie the knots "at half past two in the morning with her eyes shut" had well and truly gripped her,



"...Mademoiselle 'Delfin'..."

and before long the bowline, the clove hitch, the figure-eight loop and all the rest of them had become firm friends.

The sauerkraut tour

"Would you like to do the sauerkraut tour?" the skipper asked a few weeks later. The sauerkraut tour? Yes, the sauerkraut tour! The skipper had found a large number of enthusiastic reports on the Internet describing the circular tour through the Saar canals, the Rhine-Marne canal with a detour to Saverne, and the Moselle and the Saar. We then obtained some further literature – the skipper had gone cruising on the Main the year before, accompanied by Wolfgang Banzhaf's guide to the region, so we got hold of his book on our area and learned that our cruise along the Saar canals, the Rhine-Marne canal, the Moselle and the Saar was known as the Quiche Lorraine Tour. Banzhaf's book was a constant

and reliable guide for us throughout our trip. The plan was to take a trip through Anette's homeland, but looking at it from a completely different perspective than that of a cyclist, pedestrian or motorist. It seemed like a wonderful idea!

Mademoiselle 'Delfin'

The skipper soon found a charterer who had four handsome boats. The Schönberger family from Saarlouis in the Saarland, the owners of Yacht Charter Holiday Tours, were very supportive and helpful in all sorts of ways right from the outset, and we would like to thank them again here. One day in April the skipper and his lady companion kept an appointment with Mr Schönberger at the Merzig marina to have a look at his boats and take one for a trial run. And the two of them fell in love. Not with each other – they'd already done that – but with another lady, who looked so delightful and elegant lying there in the harbour that we immediately decided on a threesome with Mademoiselle Delfin. Mademoiselle Delfin is a Linssen Grand Sturdy 29.9, built in 2007, pretty as a picture and a real gem in all respects. The skipper and the Delfin went on a trial run to get to know each other a little. So manoeuvrable was Miss Linssen that skipper and boat immediately became friends, passing determinedly through the narrow marine harbour entrance and out into the Saar, coming smoothly alongside the quay wall before turning in a very confined space and then returning happily together to the marina, where the Linssen gently backed into her berth.

The skipper sighed contentedly about the sailing qualities of the Linssen 29.9, her direct responsiveness, her manoeuvrability and above all her handling, which was so good-natured and consistent. The two of us looked at each other and we knew – this was the young lady we wanted to take on our cruise along 400 kilometres of river, through 86 locks, 2 tunnels and one inclined plane, covering two canals, two rivers and three countries!

Things were now getting serious – a cruise plan had to be drawn up. How many kilometres would we be able to do each day? How long would the locks take? In which towns



should we perhaps lay up for a day? When would our boat need supplies, and fresh water? Were our initial plans at all realistic? Question after question – which Mr Schönberger patiently answered, giving us lots information and tips about the trip.

The first lock

June 22 moved ever closer, and our excitement and anticipation grew and grew until finally, there was just one more night on terra firma and then we would be off. On Monday morning we were off: Mr Schönberger was waiting for us at the marina in Saarbrücken, and told the skipper and his crew again about everything they had to remember during the cruise.

The weather was perfect for setting off. The sun was shining without being too strong, the wind was still a little fresh (the wind would always freshen up later whenever we could have done without it, e.g. when entering or leaving locks, or mooring in harbours). So skipper Ralf and his Head Deckhand Anette (who would have to be the

Head Lock Operative, Head Fender Putting Out Operative, Head Tying Up Operative, Head Casting-Off Operative, Head Rope Coiler and Head Chef), together with Able Seaman Werner for assistance on the first day, boarded their handsome yacht and set off – directly to the first locks at Gündingen.

DELFIN Linssen glided calmly and peacefully into the first small lock just after Saarbrücken, the two deckhands excitedly preparing for their first lock manoeuvre. Put the fenders out at the right height, check the ropes again, have the boat hooks ready, check the fenders again, can't do any harm – is that boathook still where I put it 20 seconds ago? - will the deckhands be able to grab the bollard at the lock properly with lines and boathooks? - why on earth do the gloves stick to each other like that? - is the boathook still there, are the fenders still hanging properly? With the deckhands sweating from their exertions, skipper Ralf calmly brought the Delfin into the lock in a precision approach and stopped exactly at the bollards. And again I could see from the sparkle in his

perfect approach in the narrow lock a real pleasure. *“Fenders clear?” “Lines clear?” “Boathook clear?” “Fenders clear, lines clear, boathook clear, skipper!”* The lock keeper closed the gates and water rushed in, lifting the boat up 3 metres; the gates opened again and we had successfully navigated our first uphill lock, and sailed on into the Saar Canal.

At the Gündinger Lock the lock keeper gave us a remote control for the automatic locks, which had to be given back just before the Mittersheim moorings. There is a clearly visible sign about two to three hundred metres before the entrance to each lock to activate with the remote control before waiting briefly for the lock traffic light to show green, signalling that it is clear to enter.

Saar Coal Canal

The Saar Canal used to be called the Saar Coal Canal, because until the middle of the 20th century, barges carried coal from what are now the Saarland coal mines along the Rhine-Marne Canal to the Rhine, before returning with iron ore from Lorraine and Alsace for the Saarland steelworks. The locks are exactly matched to the size of the coal barges of the time – 39 m long and 5.15 m wide.

We sailed on in our good-looking yacht through a stunning landscape of gentle rolling hills, with trees and bushes lining the edge of the canal, butterflies fluttering by – and always somebody shouting *“Lines clear?” “Boathook clear?”*, as the locks came thick and fast until the lock manoeuvre quickly became routine for the two deckhands. Our first mooring

was at the idyllic jetty at Witttringen, where we celebrated the Head Deckhand’s birthday with friends who arrived later. Supper was cooked on the barbecue at the mooring, followed by a wonderful evening. Everybody was curious to inspect our little yacht, and we were proud to show them all our little gem. Everybody marvelled at the large number of stowage facilities for clothes and supplies, and the clever layout. And so we finished our first exciting and exhilarating day on the boat on the aft deck together with friends, including a small Jack Daniels. The second night on board took us to Mittersheim, where the lake is a weekend destination for many people from the Saarland, the Palatinate and Lorraine; some have small weekend houses there or come to go fishing, rowing or windsurfing.

French inland waterways. Irresistible

Next day, we mastered a chain of 13 locks in close succession, together with a trio of Swiss houseboats. You have to register for the Mittersheim locks the day before, and it is advisable to cast off as soon as the first lock opens at 9 in the morning, since at 12 on the dot the French lock keepers go off for a well-earned lunch hour - and lunch is sacred in France! Not that we begrudged them it, since they accompanied us with their car along the towpath by the canal, opening and closing by hand all those locks that are not yet automated. *“Our”* lock keeper was a lady who was always energetically assisted by the boat crews travelling with us – *merci, Madame, merci Messieurs!* If you cast off from Mittersheim after 9 in the morning, you have to twiddle your thumbs for an hour in the middle of the chain of locks



“...exceptionally scenic mooring, directly opposite the classical façade of the Château des Rohan...”

– you can't move forwards or backwards. The next morning, we cast off from the harbour at Niderviller in the direction of Saverne. As was so often the case, we encountered friendly helpful people here as well – the harbourmaster even lent us his bicycle so that we could buy fresh baguettes and brioches in the village.

The next stretch is the most outstandingly scenic of the entire trip, according to the British boating writer and photographer Hugh McKnight, and we can only agree. *"If I was ever given just one day to convince people of the beauties of boating on French canals, I would take them on the 20-km stretch on the Rhine-Marne canal between Saverne and Niderviller, in the northwest of Alsace. We would sail uphill through locks, along the Zorn valley between its steep heavily-wooded sides to Lutzelbourg, where we could admire this attractive town in the Vosges before carrying on to Arzviller where the inclined plane would lift our boat up a steep hillside, then sail on through pine woods and finally go underground in 2 tunnels that lead to the gentle Lorraine countryside. These 20 kilometres are a microcosm of everything that irresistibly attracts me to French inland waterways"* (Banzhaf, page 150).

Two tunnels

We were fortunate enough to sail along this wonderful stretch in both directions, as Saverne was where we turned around to come back.

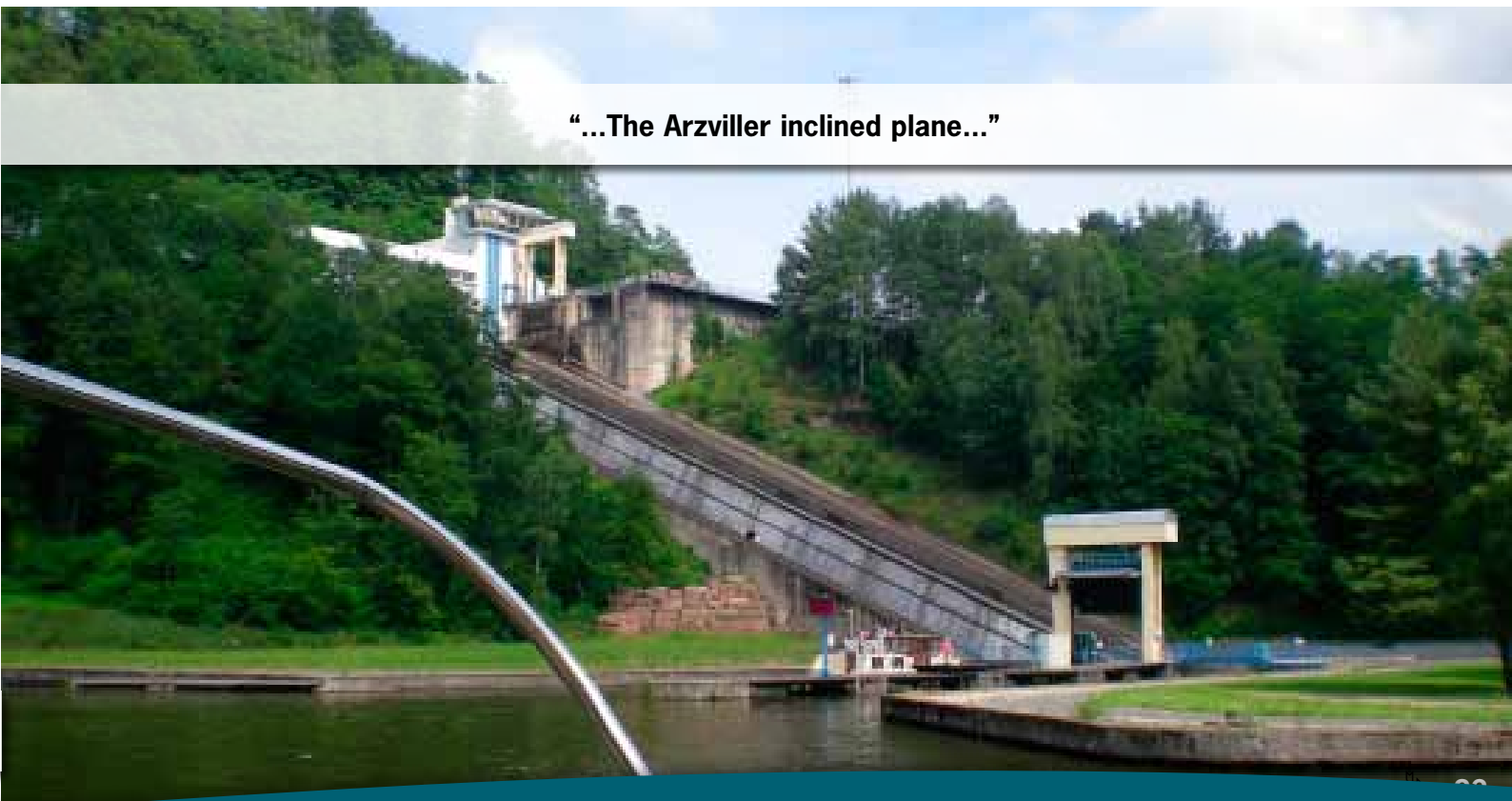
First we went through the first tunnel, 480 m long, where a bat greeted us at the entrance. The second tunnel – almost



"...'Our' lock keeper was a lady..."

2.5 km long - called for a bit of concentration, and the use of our 55 W halogen spotlight and its little brother. Scarcely had we emerged into daylight again when another high point of the trip was waiting for us – the Arzviller inclined plane, for which we have to thank the Lorraine coal barges, long since out of service. Commissioned in 1968, the inclined plane was constructed to save the barges from spending a complete working day navigating 16 locks to overcome a height difference of 42 metres. We tied up our Linssen 29.9 in the caisson of the inclined plane, and slid slowly down-↵

"...The Arzviller inclined plane..."



wards. This experience is an absolute must, even if it means sailing down the valley first when taking this diversion to Saverne off the Quiche Lorraine Tour, and then upwards on the way back. If you do the Big Sauerkraut Tour, you carry on from Saverne towards the Rhine and Strasbourg before reaching the Moselle at Koblenz.

Saverne

We tied up in the harbour at Saverne at an exceptionally scenic mooring, directly opposite the 140-m long classical façade of the Château des Rohan of 1740. We got ourselves and our Delfin ready for the evening and finished the day with a couple of tasty Alsatian tartes flambées, accompanied by a glass or two of Pinot Gris in a small restaurant just by the lock.

The next morning we cast off in beautiful sunshine, and navigated the inclined plane and the two tunnels before tying up for the evening at the jetty of a small place with the tongue-twisting name of Xouaxange. Once again our cruise provided us with a very moving and interesting encounter: a pilgrim following the Way of St. James had pitched his tent on the meadow by the jetty, having set off on his heavily-laden bicycle a few days earlier from Ettlingen near Karlsruhe. He was riding some 100 km each day and intended to give thanks to St. James at the cathedral in Santiago de Compostella within six weeks. We wished him wholeheartedly all the best and a good journey.



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Read part 2 of the Quiche Lorraine Tour in the next edition of Serious Pleasure.



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The previous edition of *Serious Pleasure* included the report of the first part of the Quiche Lorraine Tour, with Linssen Grand Sturdy 29.9 Delfin sailing from Saarbrücken to Saverne. An impressive voyage taking in picturesque places, locks, tunnels and inclined planes. The second part begins in Xouaxange, in north-east France.



The Quiche Lorraine Tour with Delfin (part 2)

Two canals, two rivers and three countries

TEXT AND PHOTOS ANETTE LEISTENSCHNEIDER AND RALF DEIMEL

The skipper set out to explore the village and returned with a beaming smile. He had reserved a table for dinner at the cosy local inn. But that was not all, there was a shop next to the inn for stocking up on supplies. He had ordered a baguette and brioches from the innkeeper for the next morning. In the evening, we ate a delicious entrecôte and drank superb



“...Enjoying sun and scenery...”

Alsace wine before returning very contented to the boat.

There was heavy rain during the night and we prepared for a chilly day. After having sailed several kilometres along the Marne-Rhine canal towards Nancy, the sun broke through the clouds and we put our fleece jumpers back in the forward cabin. Today, we would be passing through the extremely deep lock at Réchicourt, which also goes by the macabre name of ‘the grave’.

The lock bridges a height difference of sixteen metres, which makes it the largest lock in that respect in the French waterway network. We were immediately very impressed by the lock’s structure. On entering, the lock keeper not only handed over a remote control for the following canal locks, he signalled us to move to one of the front bollards. “*C’est plus doucement ici, Madame!*”, or “*This is a more*

pleasant position, madam!” Our short stay in this imposing structure was a remarkable experience, and we looked up higher and higher as the giant lock doors closed. This is how Tutankhamen must have felt in his tomb. Delfin’s engine was turning over gently in neutral and we even found it a bit of a shame when the lock doors opened and we had to continue our canal voyage.

We sailed towards Nancy using the remote control to prepare the locks a few hundred metres in advance. We rarely needed to wait until the lock lights turned to green and the doors opened to allow us to enter the lock. If the skipper could not reach the operating lever on the quay from the boat, he had to disembark in the lock to set the process in motion by operating the level manually. His one and only deckhand was always glad when he embarked again.

Our imagination knew no bounds

We were heading for Parroy, but on this particular Saturday evening the local harbour was closed to transient boaters due to a canoe race. We therefore opted to continue to Crevic where we berthed around 7 p.m., tired but content. We secured Delfin and decided to go in search of a restaurant in the village. Except for a simple café, there was little on offer and so we decided to prepare our meal in our boat’s galley. Our imagination knew no bounds. Because after the first snack comprising a few delicious olives, a second amuse bouche followed consisting of enticing blocks of French salami, which were a perfect treat. We then enjoyed a very individual pasta creation and an improvised cheese board. After an exhausting voyage of almost nine hours, the skipper was treated by his deckhand to a filling meal. And he enjoyed it to the full! He was very enthusiastic about the improvised menu. In these idyllic surroundings it tasted as if it came from the kitchen of a three-star restaurant. Our gas fire gave off a pleasant heat and all these cosy elements ensured that this would be a meal to remember.

On the Sunday, we sailed past imposing business parks and crossed the canal aqueduct over the River Meurthe, which

flows in small cascades under the Marne-Rhine canal. On this hot sunny afternoon, we finally berthed in Nancy harbour. It was again clear how manoeuvrable our boat is, the Delfin glided elegantly in reverse into its mooring position. Anyone wanting to sail into Nancy on such a wonderful summer Sunday should arrive in the early afternoon, because Nancy is a very busy harbour. The city is extremely interesting. Our neighbours – an American couple whose boat had been berthed in Nancy harbour for four weeks – recommended visiting the son et lumière in the evening at Place Stanislas. And sure enough, this show was very impressive! What they projected on the wall of the hôtel de ville was really unbelievable. The combination of colour and sound, statues, baroque monuments and the Louis XIV style... we were amazed.

Glorious sunshine

On Monday, we continued our voyage in the direction of Metz in glorious sunshine. And the deckhand was also beaming because the skipper had included a rose for her in that morning's shopping, and it would continue to give her a great deal of pleasure long after the voyage. Once we had left Nancy, we raised our mast again. Our voyage was preceded by heavy rainfall, so the water level in the canal was

remarkably high. To avoid too many difficulties when passing under low canal bridges, our boat charterer had advised us to lower the mast before our voyage. But from here, our Grand Sturdy could sail proudly displaying its mast.

We reached the first locks along the Moselle which were 170 metres long, and were therefore very different to the canal locks we had been used to up until then. For some time, we had been using the locks with a large cargo vessel. The skipper's on-board radio proved to be useful too. *"Calling Frouard lock, this is motor yacht Delfin. We are at kilometre 157 in the direction of Metz. May we enter the lock, over?"* *"This is Frouard lock, use the small lock on the left-hand side!"* We waited in front of the lock chamber until a pleasure boat with children had left the lock in front of us.

Just like elsewhere, everyone was friendly in Metz harbour. The next morning, our nice Dutch neighbours helped us to fill the water tank as we did not appear to have the right adaptor, even though we had several types with us. People were helpful, tips and other information were exchanged and we were forever meeting other friendly boaters. We continued along the Moselle in our gorgeous boat. We passed huge cargo ships of 5,000 tonnes or more and shared the locks with commercial vessels and other leisure craft.



"...The evening light over Sierck-les-Bains..."



**"...Saarburg;
An amazing waterfall in the town centre..."**

And precisely on the hottest day of our holiday, we had to wait quite some time at Thionville locks. An enormous cargo vessel had to pass through that took up the entire lock. A problem arose when it tried to leave the lock. As a ship of the same size wished to enter the one-way lock from the other side, the passage was blocked. It was three hours before this vessel could be guided back into the narrow entrance canal so that the first ship could pass through and the second could finally make its way through the lock.

Another wonderful evening on board

On Tuesday evening we berthed at the jetty in Sierck-les-Bains, which were already closed. We were looking forward to having dinner in the village, but that ended in initial disappointment. All restaurants were closed on Tuesday. So we settled down on our cosy after deck where we enjoyed pasta, red wine, a splendid sunset and the view of the local château. Another wonderful evening on board.

We did not cast off next morning until about 11 a.m. Our plan was to refuel at Schwebsange harbour in Luxembourg where we would pick up a friend who would then be sailing

with us for the final two days. Gaby, an enthusiastic sailor, had travelled specially from Munich to Luxembourg to sail with us on the Moselle and the Saar.

After having to wait two hours for a new supply of diesel to be delivered to the fuelling station, we welcomed our guest on board and sailed on. We continued our voyage between the wine slopes and enjoyed the sun and the scenery. In the late afternoon we arrived in Wasserbillig, where the friendly harbour master recommended a restaurant right next to the marina where we rounded off the evening with a refreshing Luxembourg Elbling wine and a juicy steak.


The end of our voyage was approaching and we departed (with a slight sense of melancholy) and continued along the Moselle. On the way, we passed the Princesse Marie-Astrid passenger vessel on which in 1985 the Schengen Treaty was signed, as well as several wide motor cruisers and a patrol boat belonging to the water police. From Konz in Germany, the last stretch of our voyage began along the River Saar. On the penultimate day, we arrived in Saarburg, a pretty wine town with an historic centre that is certainly worth a visit. We berthed next to DELFIN's 'big sister'. A Linssen Grand Sturdy 430 Mark II was already moored at the transient boaters jetty in Saarburg marina. It was an absolutely majestic boat. The other marina visitors were full of admiration for the two sisters.

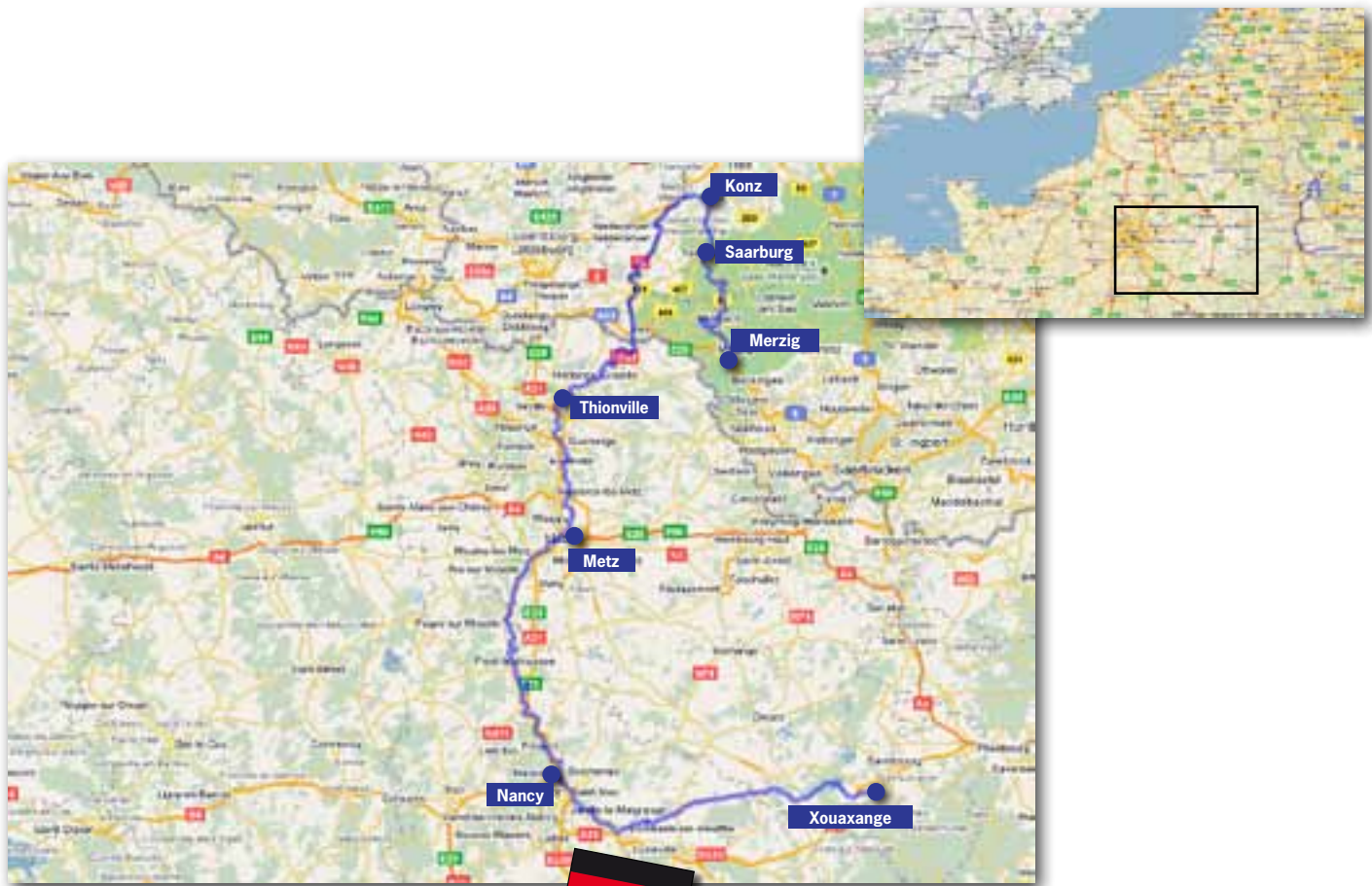
A waterfall in the town centre

After preparing our boat for a trouble-free departure for the final time, we took a thirty-minute stroll to the town centre where we found an amazing waterfall. The water cascades and is diverted onto three water wheels that drive an old mill. We spent the evening of this hot summer day on the market square where we enjoyed a simple meal and a good local wine. Once we returned to the yacht, we sat on the aft deck for quite some time looking back on our voyage.

Our final day would bring us back to Merzig, DELFIN's home port. We wanted to pick up a number of guests, after passing through Mettlach lock, who we had invited for the last ten kilometres of our voyage. But for the second time during our holiday, we had to wait longer than expected in front of a lock. We were only able to enter the lock after two large pleasure craft had passed through the lock at intervals of thirty minutes. We had previously had to wait almost an hour along the quayside. The skipper of a sport boat behind us passed through this lock frequently and knew how long it sometimes takes. He uses the waiting time profitably to take a stroll on land.

Our new guests really enjoyed the voyage through the Saarschleife, a famous meander in the Saar around a foothill of the Taunus low mountain range. Several heads of state, such as Prussian King Frederick William IV, Konrad Adenauer, Jacques Chirac and Angela Merkel have visited the Cloef panorama to enjoy the view of the magnificent landscape.

In Merzig, we berthed for the last time before enjoying a farewell meal with our guests on the aft deck. Under a magnificent starry sky, we said we hoped to make another voyage with a Linssen in the not to distant future. Two fantastic weeks that we would remember for a long time had come to an end. 



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My relationship with the Netherlands dates back to a time when I thought that owning a motor yacht would be absurd as I was too deeply into sailing yachts. Never say never ... It was love at first sight when I saw the plans for the Linssen Classic Sturdy 360 OC (open cockpit) which was then just about to come on to the market.



Grüezi Holland!

Love at first sight

Text Josef Walker

We immediately sold our sailing yacht and “furnished” ourselves with a 170 foot motor yacht in Maasbracht. Of course, over the years this was spread over four brand-new Sturdys, which were used almost exclusively in France, except for our current Grand Sturdy 430 MK II.



“...Burdaard on the Dokkumer Ee...”

The total length of 170 feet comes from the fact that our latest yacht is actually 44 feet long.

Over 3 years or 500 operating hours have passed since we left Burgundy and headed for Holland via the Rhine-Rhône Canal, Rhine and Meuse to Maasbracht. That’s about 1,150 km and 148 locks. This journey could only be achieved in 10 days with a good friend. In the literature on waterways, the Canal du Rhône au Rhin is described as one of the most beautiful. I’m not the only one who feels that way.

Holland at last!

In terms of area, Holland is almost the same size as Switzerland. Holland is just 243 km² bigger but contains almost 9 million more people. Instead of the Alps, there is water, water and even more water, some of it even below sea level. And that is exactly what has long drawn me to Holland.

It was only logical that I should prepare by immersing myself in the very extensive literature sometime before I left for France. Books by Jan Werner (Delius Klasing), Manfred Fenzel (Edition Maritim) and others take you to the most beautiful destinations. The comprehensive maps published by the Dutch ANWB (ANWB is the Dutch equivalent of the AA in the UK) are very detailed. The same is true the electronic map for my plotter, which I treasure very much.

“Ship’s Bible”

An essential item to have on board from the start is the ANWB Wateralmanak 1 containing police regulations and many useful tips. It’s a kind of “ship’s Bible” with over 800 pages. These regulations have recently become available in German as well. With over 900 pages, the ANWB Wateralmanak 2 contains everything that you have to or would like to know at any time, e.g. when a bridge is going to be raised again or all the details of over one thousand harbours! You can find both books everywhere where there’s a nautical shop. They are of course in Dutch. However, with some goodwill, this is seldom a problem. Things are much more difficult when it comes to understanding what people are saying. I’d also like to mention something that always gives me some consolation: the fact that someone from Limburg in the South can hardly understand what someone from Friesland in the North is saying.

Internet

You can also find excellent information on the Internet. Many harbours now provide wireless Internet access free of charge or for a small fee. However, it’s worth visiting one of the telephone shops that you will frequently encounter. There you can buy a USB stick for a few euros containing thousands of megabits from a leading company for your laptop. Get the salesperson to log in the device for the first time with your laptop straight away. Otherwise you could quickly have a problem. As we know, data transfer via roaming can quickly lead to a situation where you can no longer afford to fill up with diesel later in the journey!

Cast off!

Maasbracht – virtually the birthplace of Linssen yachts – is practically the most southerly navigable point in the Netherlands. But it's also the largest harbour for working vessels on inland waterways.

Three giant locks, which are currently being enlarged, form the section of the Juliana Canal which leads upstream (south) towards Maastricht and the Belgian border. This means that our route into the low countries takes us downstream on the Meuse to the north. Our journey had hardly started when we encountered a fairly large water sports area. With its various lakes and many marinas, Roermond is very busy, particularly at weekends. Sailing boats, which have priority, can make progress quite difficult for motor yachts. However, it's a very special feeling being in the middle of this throng.

A particular feature in this area are the extremely high dolphins to which the landing piers are attached. The Meuse can rise to quite a high level (usually in winter), which is also true of practically all other major rivers. It rises so high that some of these dolphins have now been extended upwards and are a good two storeys high. Otherwise, the Meuse is a wonderful, peacefully flowing river. It has soft banks with countless water birds, as well as horses, cows and sheep. Apart from the sections on which sailing at high speed is permitted. There you have to watch out behind as well! Otherwise you may find yourself back on the "towpath" because a bigger boat has rushed past, frequently with its cylinder outlets open just at that moment.

In between, quite a distance away, is a lock. No, not one but three close together which are almost always in operation. There's no shortage of locks here! However, passing through a lock occasionally gives you the jitters if your own stern is just in front of the red strip of the sill and the stern of a freighter is equally close to your bow. However, it is surprising how carefully the captains of freighters with a cargo weighing a couple of thousand tonnes set off. Here and there on the banks, amusingly designed signs from Rijkswaterstaat – the national body with the yellow boats used to maintain the waterways – are highly effective. Their website, www.rijkswaterstaat.nl, is well worth a visit.

Instead of bridges, there are the "kabelponts" – ferries, which always set off just as we're going past. Make sure they don't rush by close to your stern. An encounter with their steel cable or chain will have disastrous consequences. But not for the ferry...

While we're on the subject of bridges: further north, especially in beautiful Friesland, many bridges are so low that

they have to be opened first in order to allow traffic through. This happens quite quickly and sometimes involves paying a fee. This is paid free of charge into the "klomp" (clog) presented by the bridge keeper as you pass through. All the bridges have a name. This means you can look them up in the "Wateralmanak" to see when they are closed. Jostling in front of the closed bridge at lunchtime – even if the keeper is roaming around again – is a waste of time. You will be allowed through exactly on time. The vast majority of lock



**"...evening calm in Well
on the Meuse in Limburg..."**

keepers and bridge keepers are very pleasant and helpful.

Holland. The land of steel yachts

Once you have tied up in one of the countless harbours, you can safely assume that everything will cost you something but it will be in perfect condition and will work.

However, I often have the feeling that a kilowatt of electricity means a different quantity of energy in each harbour. Depending on weather conditions, a very lively wind can sometimes blow through the harbour. Once again, you can then see that motor yachts can also sail. Unfortunately, the best place to see this is in the harbour basin. Don't be disappointed if there are skippers there who observe very closely how the manoeuvre is carried out without assistance. They assume that the owners of a proud Linssen yacht are also able to sail.

Quite often, this results in pleasant contact with the locals afterwards. Although it is unfortunately still a fairly rare occurrence for them to sail a Linssen, you can feel their pride in the fact that such perfect yachts are built in their country. Actually, Holland is the land of steel yachts. Countless boatyards, even small ones, build very beautiful boats. They are usually completely customised to meet the owner's requirements. Added to these are the wonderful, very old ↵



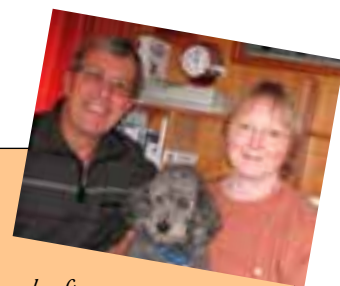
flat-bottomed boats with their wooden masts and powerful leeboards. Only our great grandparents' generation at best will be able to remember their keels being laid. Dutch shipbuilding quality apparently pays off and is extremely durable.

It's not only in harbour facilities that you can moor but often in the centre of towns as well! Or in the middle of a lake ("meer" in Dutch). All around you is only water, nature and tranquillity! There are islands with long and short berths in bays. The way the jetties are occupied is often peculiar. In the centre is a boat whose name you've seen a dozen times before. This means that no one else can moor in front of or behind the thing, which usually does not have a number and whose speed is less than 20 km/h. Besides nature, there is a container for boaters' litter. In addition, it is often windy, which makes it impossible to read Linssen's Serious Pleasure on the aft deck. But no matter. The interesting magazine will be picked up a few times anyway. If you can't or won't wait any longer, insert the USB stick in your laptop and go to www.seriouspleasure.com. Have fun!

Friesland

The bodies of water in Friesland are impressive, with water levels at different heights. There are dreamlike houses, the floors of which are often only a few decimetres above the level of the canal which is usually perfectly encased with wood. It is impressive how water has been used in this country for centuries. There are directional signs at canal intersections or branches, just like on the roads. This is very useful because there are only cows in front of, behind and beside the canal bank. Or one of the many beautifully preserved windmills, which simply belong here. Even today, the wooden shafts are usually greased with lard.

Once back at home, I'm very soon longing for the wonderful little towns often protected by huge ramparts, the houses built perfectly of brick hundreds of years ago and the windows, which almost always contain a small exhibition. Then there are the house doors, painted in shades of high-gloss black or green or blue. I'd like to make a photo gallery of them one day. For that very reason, I really wish to visit Holland often in future. It is logical that the photographic equipment required can be transported extremely conveniently on the waterways. On our fabulous Linssen Grand Sturdy 430 Mark II "PLAISIR".



Just like Rollo Gebhard, Yvonne and Josef Walker fell in love with the Classic Sturdy 360 OC in 1992 and, after many years on sailboats, decided to switch to a motor boat. He became a Linssen connoisseur par excellence. A customer became a friend. Over the years, the first yacht was followed by a Classic Sturdy 400 and a Grand Sturdy 500 and after using the lake of Neuchâtel and Burgundy as their home port, Yvonne and Josef Walker are now sailing their Grand Sturdy 430 MK II 'PLAISIR' in the Netherlands. Sailing in the Netherlands as seen through Swiss eyes. An interesting perspective, and not only for our international guests.



On a clear day, you can see forever. In the outer Oslo fiord, the air is never as clear as on a bright, chilly winter day. Not a boat in sight and the only ones on board are my 13-year-old son Julius and I. The winter archipelago surrounding our beloved island Tjøme rests in perfect tranquillity and the Volvo Penta D3, discreetly humming below the Grand Sturdy's thoroughly insulated steel plates, does not disturb it much. For that, I'm particularly grateful.



Winter Wonder Land

Norwegian conversion from a Colin Archer to a Linssen

Text Helge Johnsen; Photos John P.Marthinsen & Gunnar Rougnö

For the past few days, the more than 500 small islands scattered around the approximately 40 square kilometres island Tjøme, have been generously covered with snow, almost down to the rim of the calm blue sea. The blue, glittering sea and the blue sky form a beautiful contrast to the all white islands shining brightly in the sun. Julius and I take it in, beholding it silently. No need for words. I have seen it so many times, but it still leaves me humble and grateful. On days like this, I always think of my ancestors living on one of these small islands. Fishermen, sailors and strong women, continuously working. Materially poor, but not really lacking anything. To them, the boat was half their life, sometimes the whole, and sometimes the end. My great grandfather, captain of tall ship BUD, went down with his ship somewhere along the journey from Scotland to a town

near Tjøme in November 1905. His widow and her seven children received compensation from the ship owner equivalent to 7 to 8 euros.

Granite Islands

There is no English word for these small granite islands, probably because there is nothing like them anywhere in the world. Nothing grows except for some scarce, tiny, but beautiful coastal flowers. The granite is polished to perfection and everything is carefully rounded and free of sharp edges. Naturally shaped sun beds are found everywhere and during summer nights, the warmth collected from the sun keeps the granite and your body warm until the sun rises again in the east. But then of course, in midsummer, the sun merely takes a short brake and the nights are never



“...Granite and snow...”

dark. More than 10,000 years ago, a good 1,000 meter thick inland ice covered Scandinavia. The rare combination of ice this thick and extremely hard stone, such as granite and cyanite, shaped these gentle forms. The ice itself was not the actual artist though, but a layer of melting water containing sand and pebbles, wearing away at the ice with incredible power, carving and polishing the stone into these gentle shapes. Most of the birds residing here in the summer took to the wings a few months ago and flew south. Some to Africa, some all the way to Antarctica and some lazy specimens simply go for the French and English coastlines. I am looking forward to taking the Grand Sturdy out in early spring when all these lovely birds reappear, and manoeuvre her carefully and quietly through the narrow and sometimes shallow necks and sounds. Again, the Grand Sturdy's quietness will come into its own.

Norway's second highest lighthouse

Sailing a little further, the two lighthouses Svenner and Færder come into sight, the latter built in 1857, still being Norway's second highest lighthouse. The light shining from its 43 metre top is clearly visible 19 nautical miles away. My family and I have spent several fantastic days and nights there, and we very much look forward to taking the Grand Sturdy there. On fine summer days, there may be a handful of visitors in daytime, but by night we are usually the only ones left and can enjoy the next day's breathtaking sunrise all by ourselves. In Norway, we define nights when the temperature does not fall below 20 degrees as 'tropical nights'. Such nights occur almost every year and the small

island of "Tristein" ("three stones") on which the lighthouse is situated is the location in Norway where most tropical nights occur. The record – 18 tropical nights – was set in 1997, which is pretty amazing considering the location is 59°01'36" North, 10°31'28" East. A fair, warm, summer night, the sun sinking below the horizon only for a short while and with the day extending to almost 19 hours, is a night you will never forget. During winter storms, however, you would not like to be out there, even though you would probably not forget that either.

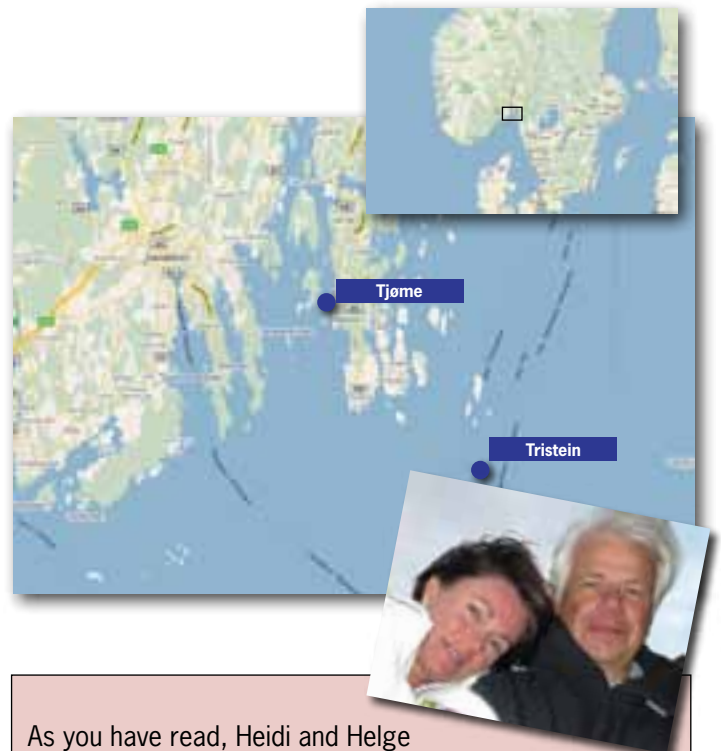
Colin Archer

This year, the storms have been fairly reasonable. Last autumn, I exchanged a Colin Archer, an extremely seaworthy long keel, wooden double ender with a two meter draft, for a Linssen Grand Sturdy 40.9 AC. A fairly radical thing to do. As I use the boat all year, I appreciate solid seaworthiness. However, I no longer seek stormy weather the way I did when I was a youngster. I must admit that I was somewhat sceptical about the 1.20 meter draft of the Grand Sturdy, but the boat was really to my liking so I wanted to test it. The same day that a furious gale blew the Chinese tanker "Full city" against the rocks of the Norwegian south coast – and at the very same place – I had the chance to test a demo Grand Sturdy from the Norwegian sales representative. Although the wind had dropped quite a bit from the night's maximum, the sea was still heavy. I deliberately handled the little ship carelessly, but the boat itself took care of the problems I presented it to. I was surprised and content.



Out on the fiord this winter day, Julius commented that “in a few weeks, we can take this trip on foot, if we like”. And he is right, of course. It seems to be a strong winter this year, and the fiord is bound to freeze over, as it does every 5 to 10 years. On the way back to the quay outside our house, we discussed the precautions we would have to take to make sure the Linssen would survive the winter without any damage. A couple of hours work, and she will be ready.

Some time at the end of March or early in April, we can cast off again and set to sea. 🛶



As you have read, Heidi and Helge Johnsen are seasoned water sports enthusiasts. They mostly cruise along the Norwegian and Swedish coast. Helge is passionate about traditionally constructed wooden vessels. The highlight was when he and a few friends decided to restore a 76-foot, 110-tonne two-master dating from 1877. The yacht was later handed over to the Norwegian Inspectorate of Ancient Objects. In 1987 (110 years later...) he single-handedly built a 30' clinker-built boat, which he still owns today. In 2009, Heidi and Helge decided to switch from their Colin Archer to a Grand Sturdy 40.9 AC.



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“...ready for winter in just a couple of hours...”



Text and Photos: Ivo Menzel

BURGUNDY IS A FANTASTIC REGION WITH A FASCINATING CULTURE, A WONDERFUL GASTRONOMIC TRADITION AND SUPERB WINES

FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO DISCOVER THE LESS WELL-KNOWN DELIGHTS IN THIS AREA FROM THE WATER, THE CANAL DU NIVERNAIS IS AN EXCELLENT OPTION. MIKE GARDNER-ROBERTS OF CHARTER COMPANY FRANCE FLUVIALE HAS AN IDEAL LINNSEN YACHT READY AND WAITING.

“Villiers-sur-Yonne?”. The taxi driver at Auxerre station looked puzzled. “Mon dieu”, he said, shaking his head, “where is it you want to go exactly? To Villiers-sur-Yonne? Apart from a few houses and an old church, there’s nothing there!” “That’s exactly where we want to go”, Petra and me answered. The driver shook his head again, adjusted his cap and drove along narrow country lanes, through charming villages and thick woodland to our destination.

An hour later, he finally understood the purpose of this long car journey. Petra got out of the taxi, walked across the medieval River Yonne bridge and waved in the direction of a brand new Linssen Grand Sturdy which was moored below. “Oh là là! What a splendid cruising boat”,

the taxi driver laughed, “that’s why you’ve come all the way out here.” I smiled, retrieved our luggage from the boot and paid the driver. “Well everything went fine”, Klaus said as he greeted me on board. While Petra was admiring the yacht’s interior, Klaus explained the route that he had sailed. “I boarded the yacht near to Decize on the Loire. The most exciting parts of the trip were the 1,200 metre long tunnel at La Collancelle, the sixteen locks at Sardy-lès-Épiry and yesterday the beautiful medieval village of Vézelay with its splendid St Magdalene basilica. I’ve been moored here waiting for you since this afternoon.”

It was a long evening. Klaus had put together a delicious plateau de fromages. He served it up with ham, foie gras, wine grapes and – as you would expect – Pinot Noir and

Chablis. Many tales were told. The moon shone a silvery light on the imposing fruit trees and plane trees around our mooring and eventually a far-away church bell heralded the start of a new day. We raised our glasses to our upcoming voyage and our sturdy Linssen, wished Klaus *bonne nuit* and retired to our comfortable aft cabin.

The sun's rays woke us promptly at 8 a.m. I disembarked to go in search of fresh baguettes. However, I wondered whether there was a baker in the village. I did not have to wait long for an answer, because as soon as I was on the Yonne bridge a delivery van approached along the Rue du Pont. The van stopped and the side window opened to reveal a huge pile of oven-fresh baguettes. "How many do you want?" asked the woman in the driver's seat. I bought three baguettes, the women served the other customers who had arrived and took her leave of us with a charming *au revoir*. When I returned to the boat, I was greeted by the smell of fresh coffee. We had a relaxed breakfast and then Klaus cast off and we sailed in the direction of Clamecy.

The mood on board became even more positive. Grassy meadows with white Charolais cattle were followed by idyllic riverbanks, bright yellow rape fields and thick woodland. At the lock near Chevroche, two cyclists from Oldenburg were waiting. They introduced themselves with "we are Uwe and Margit." They had been journeying for the past week from Decize to Auxerre. While Uwe was praising the many B&Bs along the canal, Margit was

casting her curious eye over our Linssen. "We've also had a few boating holidays", she said, "mainly on Aida cruise ships. But we've never seen such a darling little boat as this." When Klaus heard this, his face turned to thunder. But he managed to control himself and kindly asked the two whether they would like to come on board for the next part of the voyage. "There's plenty of room on board because this darling little boat is bigger than you think." "Of course", said a delighted Margit, "that would be great!"

While the two cyclists got on board, a white Renault came rushing up. A young guy got out and ran to the lock. He pulled up his sleeves, spat on his hands and opened the lock doors manually. Ten minutes later our Linssen slid gracefully out of the lock and continued towards Clamecy. The first thing we saw in this old town (which owed its prosperity to the building of wooden rafts) was the bell tower of St Martin's church, which pointed above the maple trees towards the clear blue sky. We moored in the harbour and made our way up to the old town.

The construction of the Canal du Nivernais dates back to the sixteenth century. At that time, the forests around Paris had already been cut down to provide fuel for the flourishing city, so that wood had to be transported to the capital from elsewhere over bumpy roads. The Canal du Nivernais had to act as a bridge between Paris and the forest of Bazois. However, it was another 250 years before the first sections of canal were complete. But how



was the wood transported? The trees were cut down, sawn into smaller pieces and thrown into the streams and rivers. In Clamecy, these logs were retrieved from the water and tied together to create rafts 75 metres long and 5.50 metres wide. Brave men climbed on board these ramshackle structures and guided them to the capital using long poles. However, with a population of 5,000, Clamecy was far more than just a 'terminal' for wood intended for Paris. It has picturesque half-timbered houses, snug alleyways and traditional inns, but it is also the birthplace of writers such as Romain Rolland and Claude Tillier. While Tillier amused the world with his humorous satire 'Mon Oncle Benjamin', Nobel Prize winner Rolland advocated peace and understanding during the First and Second World Wars.

The voyage continued and in Pousseaux, a hand-operated lifting bridge links both banks of the canal. We were unable to simply sail underneath, because the steel bridge was more or less the same height as the railing on our Linssen. What should we do? Just wait? For whom? There was nobody to be seen anywhere and there was no bridge keeper's house or a telephone number. There was only a sign saying that anyone who tried to operate the bridge themselves would receive a hefty fine. "Let's wait", Klaus decided. And the skipper's word is law, so we waited: 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes. After half an hour a boat came in the opposite direction. The skipper moored, disembarked and cranked the bridge up – we could hardly believe our eyes! "You can pass through", he shouted, which we were only too pleased to do.

At the stroke of 7 p.m., the lock keepers along the canal end their shift and make their way home. And needless to say, we arrived at the Châtel-Censoir lock a few minutes too late. "Rien ne va plus", said Klaus shrugging his shoulders, "we cannot go through." So we stayed the night in

the marina. But where could we get something to eat? One of the marina staff recommended a rotisserie, "five kilometres away". Although we were still considering this option, he ordered a taxi and wished us "bon appétit". After a few hair-raising bends taken at high speed along a rock face, we arrived at a traditional auberge. The fireplace was crackling away and there were photos of mountaineers on the wall. The chef wished us bonsoir and asked what we wanted to eat. There is trout, Bresse chicken and Charolais beef." We all ordered beef. "Good choice", said the three men at the table next to ours. They were rock climbers from Paris and were practising their daredevil sport on the steep Rocher du Saussois.

French writer Stendhal was a keen sailor along the canals of Burgundy. "You see the countryside far better than from a stage coach", he wrote 200 years ago. That is still true today, at least if you have the time. And time is something we had on our side! Free from stress and rush, we wandered through the sleepy alleyways of Mailly-le-Château, from where you have a view of the Yonne from a protruding rock. Near Prégilbert, we enjoyed the tasty trout of fish farmer Pageaud. We later passed through the picturesque fortress town of Cravant near to where the River Cure flows into the Yonne, before sailing gently on towards Bailly. Just like on a painting, the Yonne meanders here through woods and below vineyards slopes. We moored at the quayside in Bailly and set out on foot to climb the Col du Crémant, which name refers to a hollow limestone rock about 200 metres high. The inside of the rock serves as a wine cellar for the local Bailly Lapierre wine cooperative. Approximately five million bottles are stored in the four-hectare vaulted cellar. At the entrance, it's possible to sample modest amounts of this immense wine collection and everyone is welcome to buy as many bottles as they like. Needless to say we did not let this opportunity pass. We concluded that although excellent red wines are produced in the region between Dijon and Beaune, the north-west of Burgundy also has a lot to offer, particularly its magnificent Crémants.

The rest of our voyage can be quickly summarised. The next day at 9 a.m. we passed through the lock at Bailly. Châteaux and large mansions feature here, former tow paths have become asphalted cycle tracks and traffic speeds over the bridges. Five locks further on, we arrived in Auxerre, a city of 38,000 inhabitants. After a total of



170 kilometres along the canal and through 110 locks, our Linssen arrived at its final destination. We should really have returned our floating luxury accommodation in Vermenton. But Klaus had made arrangements with Mike Gardner-Roberts, head of charter company France Fluviale. This British Francophile and canal voyage enthusiast was willing to pick up his splendid boat in Auxerre marina. All formalities were soon completed. Together with Klaus, we strolled through the picturesque maze of the old town full of half-timbered houses. We visited the gothic cathedral of St Étienne, possibly the most famous in Burgundy. At the Tour de l'Horloge, we took our leave of Klaus and got in the taxi. "Villiers-sur-Yonne?" the taxi driver asked. After a moment's hesitation, I suddenly recognised the driver who picked us up on our arrival in Auxerre. "Non, non!, I laughed, first to Chablis to buy wine and then to the station for the train to Paris." "D'accord", he smiled. He adjusted his cap and we were off.



Burgundy

Burgundy is in the east of central France and has a rolling landscape with hills of up to 900 metres. The region covers 31,600 km² and consists of the following départements: Côte d'Or, Saône-et-Loire, Nièvre and Yonne. Auxerre (approximately 38,000 inhabitants) is the capital of Yonne and is located on the river of the same name. Together with Dijon, Auxerre is considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in Burgundy. The city has many medieval attractions, of which the most famous is the gothic cathedral of St Étienne. Chablis (16 km from Auxerre) is certainly worth visiting thanks to its world-famous Chardonnay wines. The largest city in Burgundy is Dijon (150,000 inhabitants).

Canal du Nivernais

The idea for the construction of a canal between the Loire and the Seine dates back to King Henry IV (1553-1610). Work started in 1784 and 60 years later the canal was first used as a waterway for transporting wood. The canal is 174 km long and features 110 locks. The most spectacular structures along the route include the tunnels at La Collancelle (758 m), Mouas (268 m) and Breuilles (212 m), the lock system in the Sardy valley (16 locks within 3 kilometres with a drop of 48 metres) and the aqueduct at Montreuillon (33 m high, 145 m long).

Would you like more information about yachts charters in Burgundy?

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Text and photographs: Trudy Rutten and Jan Brummel

DENMARK: THE ARCHIPELAGO OF LARGE AND SMALL, OFTEN UNINHABITED, ISLANDS

WE HAD BEEN WANTING TO TAKE TO THE SEA FOR A WHILE. IN MARCH 2012 WE TOOK DELIVERY OF OUR GRAND STURDY 430 MARK II. WITH TWO ENGINES AND STABILISERS, THE RIETVAER WAS READY TO GO TO SEA. WE DECIDED TO TAKE A TRIP TO DENMARK. WE SET OFF WITH OUR TWO DOGS FROM THE LINSSEN BOATYARD ON 29 JUNE.

We sailed up the Rhine and spent three weeks crossing Germany. The German canals are good to sail. Commercial shipping is considerate to pleasure boats and travels at a maximum of 15 km per hour. Overnight accommodation is easy to find along the route in marinas and at commercial and other quays. The applicable rules are enforced by the river police.

The Elbe-Seiten Canal has two engineering structures, including Uelzen lock with a 23 m drop. The floating bollards mean that you can relax as you pass through the

lock. The *Schiffshebewerk Scharnebeck* (Lüneburg) is a boat lift that spans 38 m. Impressive to look at and easy to negotiate – you sail into the trough, secure your boat and enjoy the view from the platform while you are lowered to the bottom within 20 minutes.

UP THE ELBE

Before you sail up this rain-fed river, it's a good idea to check the weather forecasts in Germany and the Czech Republic. In the event of heavy rainfall, the cross current can reach 10 km in a few days. We had 3 km of cross cur-

DENMARK: THE ARCHIPELAGO OF LARGE AND SMALL ISLANDS

rent, which made a pleasant change from the canals. The landscape is splendid. The many bends and shallows mean that you have to stay on the alert. The navigable channel is indicated on the shore. Already we were seeing the Danish flag flying more often. We moored at the marina in Lauenburg, a historic bargees' town with timber-frame houses and the Elbe Shipping Museum.

We continued our journey along the Elbe-Lübeck Canal through the hilly, wooded countryside of the Duchy of Lauenburg and the Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park. This 62 km canal was dug around 1900 to transport salt between Uelzen and Lübeck and has six locks. Here, you have to travel in convoy at a maximum speed of 10 km per hour. We intended to spend the night at the WSV Mölln marina. But the captain made a blunder! We moored not very prettily at the outer jetty. The current pushed us towards the jetty, which had a water tap right at the edge! A large fountain of water was the result. After Jan applied first aid, we came to a reasonable settlement with the harbourmaster about the damage.

Mölln was made famous by the tale of Till Eulenspiegel, a character from Dutch and German folk tradition.

LÜBECK (SEE TITLE PHOTO)

It's a fantastic experience to sail into this old Hanseatic town! We moored at Hansa Marina Neugen, a popular marina right next to the city centre (booking recommended). Lübeck is one large open-air museum, with its historic port, wonderful merchants' houses, warehouses

and churches. It's really worth the trouble to linger a while longer. Close to Hansa Marina is one of the city's most important mediaeval buildings, the *Schiffersgesellschaft* dating from 1535, which contains a lot of history. Since 1868 it has contained a restaurant, visited by tourists from all over the world.

TRAVEMÜNDE

It took us two hours to sail from Lübeck through the winding river estuary to Travemünde, the seaport on the Baltic. Large ferries and sea-going vessels were now passing close by and things were becoming steadily busier. We sailed through the port area into the Baltic and were amazed; ferries, fishing boats, sail and motor yachts and speedboats provided us with some lively company. We turned around again and moored in Yachtclub Fischereihafen, from where you can see the ferries sailing past.

GERMANY'S BALTIC

By this time, we had been under way for exactly three weeks and were ready to sail into the Baltic. The weather was just right for it, 0-5 knot wind and sunny. There is hardly any tide on the Baltic. The water has an average depth, which creates long waves. One aspect you have to take account of is wind direction, because it's not the wind force but the wave height combined with the wind direction that determines whether you have a pleasant trip. We sailed in very windy conditions but inshore, which meant that the wave height wasn't too bad.

Heading for the Baltic





After a fantastic five-hour trip, we moored at the port of Orth on the beautiful German island of Fehmarn. In front of us, the vintage steel sailing ship RYVAR from Flensburg was tying up with the Shanty Freunde Gimte on board who were singing wonderful sea shanties. We enjoyed it!

WE CAN RUN UP THE DANISH FLAG!

The crossing to Denmark takes about five hours. It's important to make the crossing in good weather. You cross the shipping route between Kiel and Scandinavia. To reach the Danish islands safely, you have to stay alert and cross in as straight a line as possible. On our AIS system, we saw the speed at which the ships were travelling. They were sailing a fixed course, which makes things clearer. It was great to see the stately seagoing vessels passing by. As soon as you are among the islands, the Danish South Sea is mainly used for boating and fishing.

THE WEATHER

When the wind blows straight across the sea, it can produce sizeable waves even on the narrowest waterway. During the time that we sailed there, the weather was

very changeable and we witnessed winds ranging from 0 to 40 knots. The weather can change quickly so you can go from good to bad weather, and vice versa, within one hour. One day, we reckoned that the weather changed four times but because we were sheltered by the islands this did not trouble us much.

CRUISING AREA

Consisting of many large and countless small, often uninhabited, islands, the archipelago lives up to the name of Danish South Sea. Pretty coastlines with cliffs, surrounded by beaches and friendly harbours appeared regularly on the horizon. Also special were the fjords where we could regularly see dolphins close at hand. It's a fantastic cruising area where you can travel from harbour to harbour without being held up by bridges and locks.

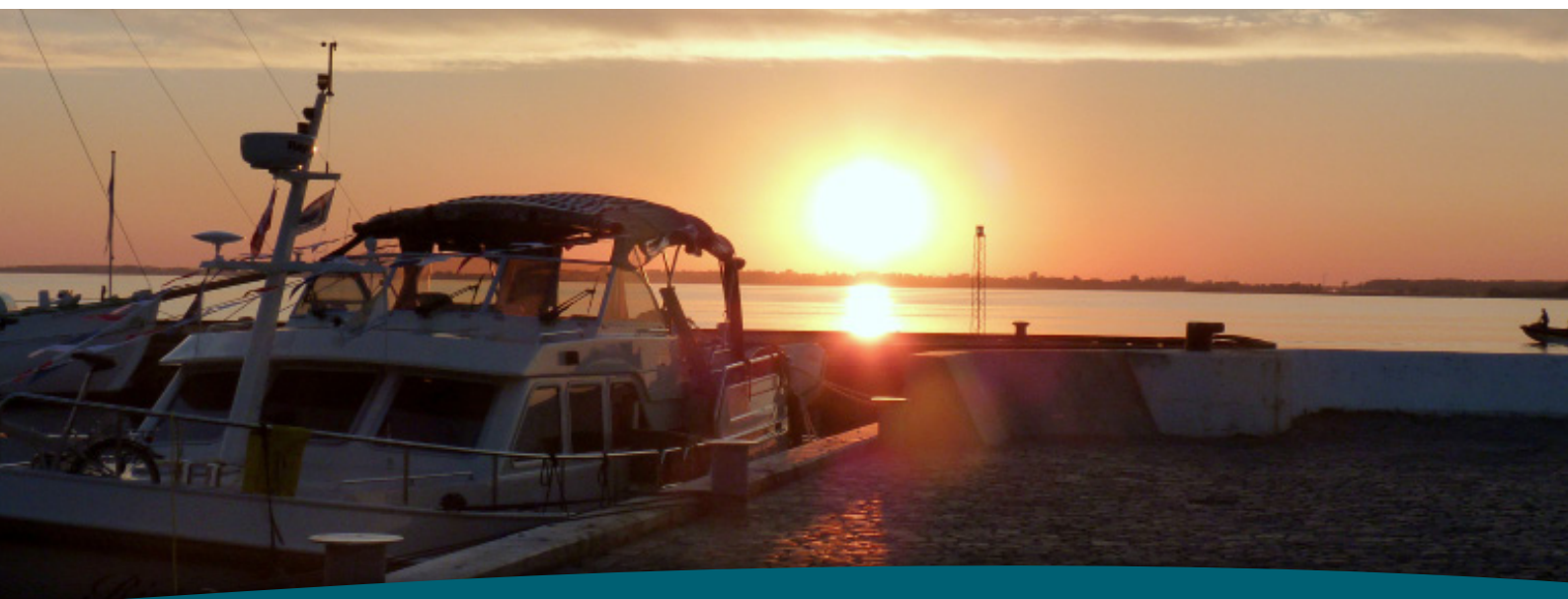
MARINAS

The marinas have good facilities and Internet access. Every marina has the same system: a green sign means vacant and a red sign means occupied. You pay at a machine and receive a sticker/receipt that you stick on your boat and an Internet login code. The harbour dues range from 23 to 24 euro (length 14 metres). Sailboats are in the majority, but there are also motor yachts and speedboats. Apart from huge numbers of Danes, we saw Germans, a few Dutch people and Swedes and Norwegians. In high season, it can be hard to find a mooring in the afternoon. Because sailing times are relatively short, you usually do find a place – provided that you depart on time. Anchoring is another good option.

TO LANGELAND

We were confronted with long waves and strong crosswinds for the first time in the Bay of Kiel. This was no problem with the stabilisers on. We swung slowly into the heavy swell. Because the popular Marstal Marina was

We enjoyed the view, the beautiful weather and a glorious sunset at Rudkøbing.



DENMARK: THE ARCHIPELAGO OF LARGE AND SMALL ISLANDS

full, we continued on to Rudkøbing. A strong wind can cause a lot of cross currents at the harbour entrance but the weather was glorious and we didn't encounter any problems. Because the place was so busy, we moored in the working harbour and the next day moved to the marina with our rear end facing the sea. We enjoyed the view, the beautiful weather and a glorious sunset. Rudkøbing is an old trading town with a bustling town centre and was an ideal place for us to replenish our supplies.

TÅSINGE

A short crossing brought us to the island of Tåsinge, with the charming town of Troense nestling in the hills. There we moored at the outer jetty of Badelaug marina, which still has a traditional harbourmaster. The water was crystal clear and we could see the crabs scuttling across the seabed. There were also very large numbers of jellyfish. Occasionally, speedboats would cause large waves and we were confronted for the first time with rising water levels (20 cm).

This amazing little town has thatched timber-frame houses in yellow, white and red and romantic, rose-filled gardens and orchards. Its links with its shipping past were still clear to see.

FUNEN TO SVENDBORG

Around the corner, on the south bank of the island of Funen is the busy port town of Svendborg. The beautiful marina is situated close to the pleasant shopping centre and the railway station. Svendborg offers every facility and has a number of museums.

FUNEN TO FÅBORG

When we set off with Fåborg as our destination, it was cloudy and misty and later started to rain. We had our head to the wind with strong gusts of up to 17 knots. Both marinas were full. We eventually moored at the wooden storm defence of the second marina. When the weather cleared up towards evening, we saw a charming landscape of houses, yellow cornfields and forest appear. The next morning we moved to the friendly commercial harbour. Further on, ferries were departing for small off-shore islands. Fåborg has the flair of a 19th-century trading town. It is a fortress town with a town gate, courtyards and timber-frame buildings. The harbour is popular among sailors and charterers. You can buy fresh fish from the former smokehouse in the industrial port next door. In Fåborg we said goodbye to a group of friendly Danes who had been travelling with us for two weeks. They gave us some handy tips about Denmark. It was nice to meet people on our travels! For instance, we met Marjolein and Jo Dohmen of the Dutch Water Sport Association in Minden and Joke and Dick Peek – also cruising on their Linssen yacht – in Heidanger.

We sailed on to Assens Marina, a modern marina right next to the beach, with all the usual facilities, including a restaurant. Assens is a very old trading port (1231) with beautiful narrow streets, merchants' houses and courtyards. Tip: the Willemoesgårdens Mindestuer local history museum is worth a visit. A supermarket and the town centre are within walking distance. We saw dolphins just outside the marina!



JUTLAND TO SØNDERBORG

The clear weather allowed us a great view of Funen's yellow fields and green hills, some of them 125 m high. We sailed into Alsford and reached the picturesque port of Sønderborg. We moored at the friendly town quay. A little further on was an ice cream parlour. Danes are crazy about ice cream. Young and old alike were queuing up to buy an often mega-sized ice cream. We looked out on to the town's biggest attraction, the castle which was built in 1170 on the orders of Valdemar I as a coastal defence to fend off attacks by the Wends. Originally, it was nothing more than a solid, fortified tower but has undergone a transformation into a renaissance castle over the centuries. After 1864 it was used as a barracks and later as a museum. Tips: take a walk by the sea, visit the castle and stroll through the old town centre.

RETURN TO GERMANY

We left Sønderborg – and Denmark – with a sense of sadness. We had spent three glorious weeks there, which we enjoyed to the full. The sea lock at Kiel and a further three hours sailing to Rendsburg made it a long trip. We sailed inshore a lot of the time. The wind grew stronger and the waves higher when we passed the estuaries of the Flensberger and Eckern Fjords but the yacht coped well.

BAY OF KIEL TO KIEL CANAL

The Bay of Kiel is one of the busiest shipping routes in the world. Large sea-going vessels and cruise liners sail continuously from the North Sea to the Baltic and vice versa. At Kiel, ships are guided into the Kiel Canal by pilots. We heard on our VHF set how sea captains kept in contact with each other to ensure that their vessels passed safely through the locks into the canal. The speed of these giants of the sea was 10-14 km per hour but the canal is 160 m wide so that caused us little trouble. The pilots en-

sure safety and keep an eye out for pleasure craft. Once again, our AIS transmitter and receiver came in handy. The Kiel Canal is 100 km long and takes two days to sail through. Each year, 19,000 pleasure boats sail through the canal, so you're not alone!

KIEL SEA LOCK

Sea-going vessels enter first in accordance with a fixed protocol. When they have been secured and the propellers switched off, pleasure craft are allowed to enter in order of arrival. We spent two hours bobbing up and down until it was our turn. Pleasure craft have priority over commercial shipping when leaving the lock. It's no easy task to moor in this lock. You have to get off the boat to tie up on rings on the extremely slippery floating jetty (even the rubber is slippery!). We reported in to the German lock keeper via the lock stairway.

ELBE ESTUARY TO CUXHAVEN

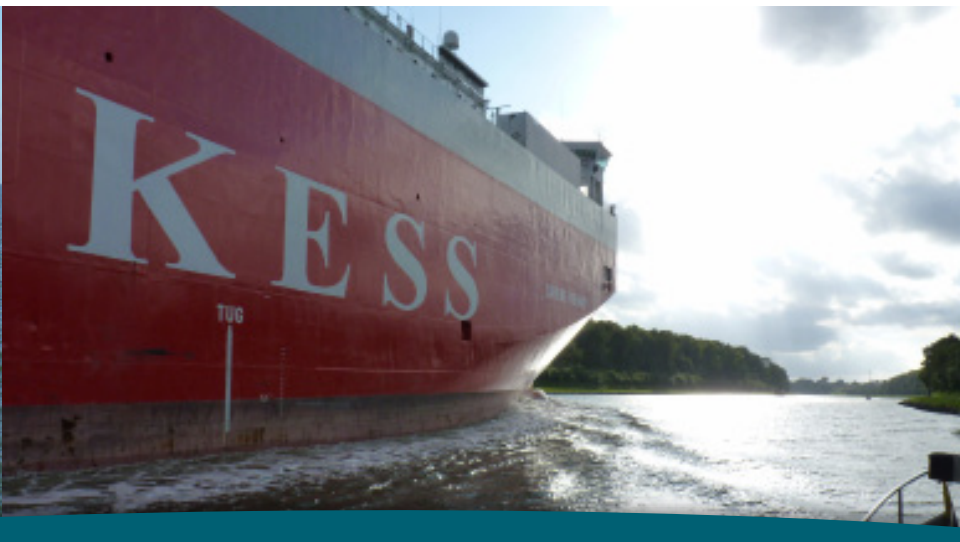
At Brunsbüttel, we passed through the sea lock into the Elbe. You have to keep a close eye on the weather reports for the crossing to Cuxhaven. Jan had been talking to experienced sea dogs about this for weeks. The time seemed right – the water was smooth and the weather almost completely calm. However, 3 km before Cuxhaven, the north-westerly wind quickly rose to 25-33 knots. As we were sailing with the current and against the wind, this produced heavy breakers. Although the RIETVAER was obviously able to cope, we didn't like it! Fortunately, the marina was close at hand and the waves died down again as soon as we were inside. While the wind was howling, we recovered from our adventure in the convivial harbour restaurant of Cuxhaven Sailing Club.

GERMAN BIGHT

The German Bight is the south-eastern part of the North

The Bay of Kiel is one of the busiest shipping routes in the world.

The car transporter Kess passing the RIETVAER in the Kiel Canal.



DENMARK: THE ARCHIPELAGO OF LARGE AND SMALL ISLANDS

Sea, bounded by Dutch and German Wadden Islands to the south, Danish Jutland to the east and the Dogger Bank to the north. The busy shipping route between the mouth of the Elbe and the Straits of Dover runs along its southern edge. In the German Bight you have to cope with depressions arriving from Iceland which cause the wind to push the waves up the North Sea.

On our departure, we sailed with the current. Our calculations seemed to be right, because when we sailed into the bend of the Weser Estuary the tide turned and we had the current with us. The trip covered 100 km and took us across the shipping line of the Elbe Estuary, past the island of Scharhorn and then through the Wadden Sea Region of the old Weser, where we called in at Bremerhaven.

Bremerhaven is one of Germany's oldest cities and has a fabulous new city centre, where Loyd Marina is also located. In a park-like landscape you will find the open-air shipping museum, architecturally significant buildings, a zoo, shopping centres and restaurants and a glorious view of the Weser. Old and new architectural styles are combined in a tasteful way. It's worth the trouble to linger a while longer!

We left at 5.00 am on 13 August to take advantage of the rising tide. Bremerhaven's skyline in the morning sunlight was a breathtakingly beautiful sight. We sailed 16 km upstream to Bremen and, as an added bonus, saw a seal on a beach near Hunte.

We continued our journey through Germany and part of the Netherlands and on 28 August the RIETVAER arrived safely in our home port of Sloten. How we enjoyed this trip, sailing on the sea, Denmark and its friendly people.



THE ROUTE

Netherlands: Maasbracht, Roermond, Venlo

Germany: Wesel, Dorsten, Münster, Recke, Minden, Peine, Heidanger, Launeburg, Schiffshebewerk Scharnebeck, Mölln, Lübeck, Travemünde, Fehmarn - Hafen Orth

Denmark: Langeland (Rudkøbing), Funen (Troense, Bådelaug, Svendborg, Faaborg, Assens), Jutland (Kolding, Sønderborg)

Germany: Rendsburg, Brunsbüttel, Cuxhaven, Bremerhaven, Bremen, Oldenburg, Leer

Netherlands: Delfzijl, Groningen, Kootsterille, Sloten

Books used for this trip:

Vom Rhein zur Nord- und Ostsee – Manfred Fenzl – Edition Maritim

Vaarwijzer: Noord Duitse Binnenwateren – Hollandia

Vaarwijzer: Scandinavië en de Oostzee – Hollandia

Journey details:

Distance travelled: 833 km

Sailing days: 33

Days in port: 29

Engine operating hours: 172

Diesel consumption: 1,239 litres



THE AUTHORS

Jan Brummel and Trudie Rutten are the enthusiastic owners of the RIETVAER.

The website www.hondenaanboord.nl contains the complete logbook for this trip, as well as information about sailing your Linssen yacht at sea and practical tips for your journey.

For seafaring dog lovers, it also contains interesting information on sailing with dogs.



Text and photographs: Luc Vanthoor

FOUR MEN AND A BOAT

THE THAMES IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING RIVERS IN EUROPE. IN FACT, THIS 346 KM WATERWAY DESERVES THE DESIGNATION “ROYAL”. I THEREFORE THOUGHT IT WAS A REAL PRIVILEGE TO BE ABLE TO CRUISE THE THAMES IN A LINSSEN GRAND STURDY 34.9 AC.

Peter invited Cornel, Paul and me to start from Hobbs of Henley – the base for Linszen Boating Holidays – and explore the scenery where the “Midsomer Murders” are filmed, setting off in October 2013. But I had some reservations: I still always associate the autumn with bleak, rainy weather, so combining that with England seemed to guarantee that I’d get wet. But things turned out completely different.

At about ten in the morning on Saturday 5 October, we arrived in Henley-on-Thames, the home base of Linszen Boating Holidays’ partner Hobbs of Henley. The fact that the Hobbs boatyard can look back on 140 years of receiving guests quickly made itself apparent. Our Linszen – the “Jacqueline IV” – was moored there waiting for us, with neatly made beds and with every luxury, in between a number of boats that absolutely radiated nautical tradition. While the first “narrowboats” glided past our mooring, Jonathan Hobbs took us on board one

of the firm’s gems, the passenger vessel “New Orleans”. This “sternwheeler” looks like it would be more at home on the Mississippi than on the Thames, with its impressive paddlewheel at the stern and its high smokestacks just aft of the wheelhouse. The New Orleans isn’t actually steam-powered, but it still has all the appeal of a real paddle steamer. All that was missing were the Southern belles with their crinolines, big sunhats and parasols, ac-



accompanied by their beaus in bespoke suits and top hats, smoking a big cigar.

Before we'd even been in Henley for half an hour I knew that it was going to be an exceptional adventure: "Four Men in a Boat" and surroundings exuding the grandeur of the Victorian period, topped with a hearty serving of nautical tradition in a region where hospitality is still something that people take seriously.

The town of Henley is situated in Oxfordshire. It is home to just over 10,000 people and also to the Leander Club, the oldest rowing club in the world. The club organises one of the world's most prestigious rowing competitions, the Henley Royal Regatta. This five-day event runs from Wednesday to Sunday at the end of the first week of July. Entry to the regatta at the Leander Club's grounds is very expensive. The site is completely sealed off and admission is solely for club members and their guests, on condition that they appear in the prescribed attire.

After visiting the New Orleans and having a nice cup of coffee at the riverside coffee house, we embarked. At about noon, we cast off and proceeded downstream, without really knowing how far we would be going. In fact, there wasn't really much choice: around here, the Thames doesn't have any navigable tributaries, so you just go either upstream or downstream.

MIDSOMER MURDERS

I was quite surprised when Peter turned out to recognise some of the places that we passed, even though he'd never been there before. It soon turned out that he is a big fan of the TV detective series "Midsomer Murders", with Chief Inspector Barnaby. All the filming for the series took place in the picturesque landscape along this stretch of the Thames. You can even take a special Midsomer Murders tour to visit the most important filming locations. What a lot of fans don't know is that "Midsomer" isn't a village but is meant to be a county with lots of villages, all located in the area around Henley-on-Thames. One of the episodes – Dead in the Water – was filmed mainly in Henley itself.

Half an hour's cruising brought us to our first lock, Hambleden Lock. It wasn't immediately clear whether we needed to operate the lock ourselves or whether the lock keeper would do it for us. But there was no lock keeper to be seen. Because it was about teatime, we quickly concluded that he was away having tea somewhere, so we decided to take ourselves through the lock. Less than a quarter of an hour later, we were able to continue downstream.

The river wound before us through the picturesque landscape. Wide meadows full of sheep, weeping willows that



It's teatime, so that means self-service at the lock

seemed to be admiring themselves in the tranquil water, magnificent villas with impressive boathouses and typically English gardens, where it seems as if the grass has been cut with nail clippers and the box hedges shaved by a barber. There were so many different impressions to take in that we actually became a bit speechless. It's hard to express the charm of this area in words.

After cruising for some four hours, and passing through four charming little locks, we arrived at the marina at Bourne End. We moored by the fuel station, parallel to the navigation channel. Bourne End is a small town with the air of a village – or is it the other way round? The harbourmaster was extremely welcoming and gave us various "tips for tourists", focusing particularly on the best places to eat or go for a drink. After buying groceries for breakfast, we went to the local Chinese restaurant and had a delicious "number 74". At about one in the morning, we turned in for our first night on board.

At about 7.30, I was rudely awakened by the shouts of someone right next to the boat. It sounded like an officer giving orders to his troops, and it sounded pretty commanding. I rushed up on deck to find out what was going on. To my surprise, there was nothing suspicious – just the mirror-like Thames, veiled in thick mist. In fact, the mist was so thick that I couldn't see the other side of the river, even though it's only fifty metres wide at this point. In the meantime, I had been joined on deck by Paul and Peter, who were rubbing the sleep out of their eyes. Once more, we heard voices from the mist. Now there were two or three, and they were approaching rapidly. Suddenly – as if from nowhere – an eight appeared, not even ten metres from our Jacqueline IV. It swept past us, followed by a little motorboat in which the coach was shouting commands to the lady crew.



Isn't that a bit dangerous? You're facing backwards, you're in thick mist, and you're going at top speed... And in fact – not two minutes later – another eight bashed into our swimming ladder. Fortunately, nobody was hurt and no equipment was damaged.

The moral of this story is therefore: on Sunday morning, certainly if its misty, try to stay as far as possible out of the navigation channel of the Thames, at least if you want to have a nice quiet breakfast.

After a lengthy breakfast, we cast off about noon and continued downstream. It was a lovely sunny day – summery rather than autumnal. The scenery was very similar to what we had seen the day before. Magnificent villas with beautifully tended gardens, boathouses that could sometimes only be distinguished from real houses be-

cause they were built in the water. The typical narrow-boats, the absence of any commercial vessels, the extreme friendliness and helpfulness of the lock keepers... in brief, everything made us feel welcome.

In the late afternoon, we arrived at Windsor, the town famous for its castle. We wanted to spend the night in Windsor but we were surprised to find that there was nowhere to moor. On the left bank there were a few shallow-draft boats tied up by a meadow, but the 1-metre draught of our Linssen meant that there was no way for us to get ashore. Fortunately, Jonathan Hobbs had warned us about this kind of thing before we set off, and had said we should phone him if we ran into any problems. Half an hour later, we were tied up alongside the “Barking”, a splendid classic steam-powered tug, and under the shade of Windsor Castle. Talk about being privileged!

At Windsor, we also noticed the large number of swans – hundreds! It was like an invasion. They all belong to the Queen, and in the third week of July each year all the swans along the Thames are counted. A law going back to the twelfth century states that all unmarked swans in English open waters belong to the monarch. The annual census – “swan upping” – is to keep track of how many there are. Swans traditionally made for a tasty banquet, and the law was to ensure that farmers, townies, and country folk kept their hands off the royal birds. Swans are no longer on the menu, but the swans are still in-

CLASSIC STEAM-POWERED TUG “BARKING”

As big fans of steel-hulled boats, we were naturally impressed by the Barking, but its crew were also pretty impressed by our Linssen. We noticed an elderly gentleman who was constantly moving around the Barking with an oil pump. He didn't say much and was concerned mainly with his vessel. It later turned out that he had been born in the same year that the Barking was built, namely 1928. The hull of the Barking is entirely held together with rivets, and the vessel is in its complete original state. Getting up steam consumes 250 kg of coal every three hours. Under the gunwales of the ship there is room for a total of three tonnes of coal. When using coal as fuel, it's very important to keep the ship balanced.



spected and counted at various places along the Thames by the Queen's Swan Warden.

A prominent part of the scene at Windsor is of course the castle. It is in fact the largest still inhabited castle in the world, and has been lived in for more than 900 years. It occupies a site of about 5 hectares. Most British monarchs since the eighteenth century have used it as a second residence because they preferred to actually live at Buckingham Palace in London. (By the way, the Queen didn't seem to know we would be coming because she wasn't at home.)

At about midnight, passing by the sleeping swans, we made our way back on board the Linssen via the deck of the Barking. We needed to get up early the next day because the crew of the Barking wanted to get underway early, on their way upstream to a get-together of traditional vessels. When we woke up at 9 o'clock, they had already been stoking the boiler for two hours. The whole vessel was glowing with the heat, and puffs of smoke were coming out of the chimney. They wouldn't actually be leaving for another two hours, so we had time for a "full English breakfast" at an inn just below the imposing castle.

At 11 o'clock we cast off and wished the crew of the Barking a safe journey upstream, while we ourselves set off downstream. After passing under the bridge that con-

nects Windsor and Eton, we came to Romney Lock. Immediately after going through, we came to a little marina with places for passing vessels. We could in fact have spent the night there. For the next half hour, we were still passing the estate surrounding Windsor Castle. It was certainly impressive, but we found ourselves wondering who on earth mows all the grass, because the grounds looked just as neat and tidy as the other gardens that we'd seen so far.

Our journey that day took us to Shepperton Marina, one of the last harbours before you get to the tidal stretch of the Thames, where you are almost in London. Shepperton Marina is a full-service marina with 455 berths. Mooring there gives you certain privileges at the nearby Holiday Inn hotel. From here, we would need to travel back upstream, because our trip would end in three days time and we needed to go all the way back to Henley-on-Thames.

The next morning, we already cast off at 10 o'clock. We wanted to cruise a bit past Windsor and visit Maidenhead. On the way, we stopped for lunch at the Swan Hotel in Staines. The hotel is situated by the water, with a really nice terrace overlooking the river.

After lunch, we continued on to the quayside at Boulter's Lock, just east of Maidenhead. Boulter's Lock is one of the best-known locks in the area, first being built in 1772. A





rowing race that took place there at the end of the eighteenth century is described in Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)*. We dined at "The Boulters", which is situated on the quayside by the lock. This restaurant offers really excellent cuisine, as is shown by its two "fork-and-spoon" pictograms in the Guide Michelin.

In the morning, we looked around Maidenhead itself but we found it a bit disappointing. There wasn't really much to see, so we were soon back on board the *Jacqueline IV*. From Maidenhead, we reached the little town of Marlow in two hours. Just upstream of the bridge in Marlow were a few moorings for passing traffic. We decided to stop

there and explore the town. Marlow is definitely worth seeing. It is familiar locally for its micro-brewery, the Rebellion Beer Company. This was started by two students in 1993 and is now famous far beyond Marlow because its beers have won several national and international awards. A large number of Marlow pubs serve the brewery's pale ale, and its special "Smuggler" and "Mutiny" beers.

After a stroll around Marlow, we cruised on to Harleyford Estate, which is situated in a picturesque location off to the side of the Thames. There has been a marina here since 1950, in between the Temple and Hurley locks. The estate is a kind of park with residential properties

Boulters Lock, Maidenhead





The Swan Hotel, Staines



FOUR MEN AND A BOAT

and holiday homes and is just a short walk from Marlow. We had the final dinner of our trip at the “Showboat”, a restaurant on an old barge. After a splendid meal, we enjoyed the last of our stock of wine on the stern deck of the Jacqueline IV. The next day, we returned the boat to Hobbs of Henley and our special adventure came to an end.



In preparation for the trip, I had read Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, which was published back in 1889. Even after 120 years, it still gets across the atmosphere of this stretch of the Thames, where time really seems to have stood still. When doing my research for this article, I found that in 1900 Jerome published a sequel to *Three Men in a Boat*, namely *Three Men on the Bummel*, which is about a group of pals who go for a trip through Germany...

Let's hope.....!

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA DESCRIBED:

- www.linssenboatingholidays.com
- www.hobbsofhenley.com
- www.canal-dvds.com





Text and photographs: Randolph Nott & Renate Thieme

CROATIA: AMONG EUROPE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL AREAS FOR CRUISING

MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY, AN IMPRESSIVE LANDSCAPE, SECLUDED BAYS, AND HARBOURS BOTH TRANQUIL OR BUSTLING – CROATIA HAS EVERYTHING THAT A CRUISING ENTHUSIAST COULD DESIRE. WITH OUR GRAND STURDY 40.9 SEDAN, WE COULD VIEW CROATIA FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE!

And to say it right away: we have been sailing the Adriatic in a number of different vessels since back in the 1980s, but none was as comfortable and safe as the Hippo – a well-deserved name! Although the Adriatic is often derided as “just a bathtub”, things can get very uncomfortable when the cold “Bora” wind sweeps down from the mountains and churns up the sea. But even in weather conditions that had made our solid old motorsailer creak and groan, and we had felt better off with lifejackets on, the Linszen lived up to its name and lay there unconcerned like a big heavy hippo in the water. But let's begin at the beginning.

After its maiden voyage on the Meuse, Waal and Rhine, we took over the new boat at Izola (Slovenia) on 6 June 2013 and set off to enjoy the transfer trip to our home marina at Simuni on the island of Pag (Croatia). The coasts of Slovenia and Istria were still very busy, with a lot of buoys marking obstacles that we had to look out for. But

despite it being the holiday season, things got less busy after we had crossed the Kvarner Gulf and left the coast of Istria. We naturally stopped off in Rovinj before the crossing. The town has a long and turbulent history. The Romans called it “Ruginium”, which the Slavs changed to “Rovinj” in the seventh century. Rovinj is well worth a visit. The townscape has been shaped by its rich history, with winding alleys and an overall Romanesque-Gothic appearance, but with renaissance, baroque, and neoclassical buildings too. Particularly striking is the Basilica of St Euphemia, whose 60 m-high seventeenth-century tower is topped by a 4.70 m-high bronze statue of Euphemia herself, the patron saint of the town.

Another interesting town is Pula, with a history dating back 7000 years. In 177 BC, it was captured by the Romans, who built an amphitheatre there in the reign of the Emperor Augustus that is now one of the main sights. Other remains from the Augustan period are the Temple

of Rome and Augustus, the partly preserved city walls with their gates, and the remains of two theatres.

After a two-week voyage with several stopovers at historically notable locations and secluded, picturesque coves, we reached our base at Simuni on the island of Pag. We have been coming here for many years, and we really enjoy the homely atmosphere of one of the smallest marinas on the Croatian coast. Pag is famous for its lace, which is still painstakingly produced by hand, and its sheep's milk cheese, now made in cheese dairies partly modernised with funds from the EU. The milk comes from sheep that graze on the mostly very poor soils – often apparently consisting only of scree – throughout the island and also on the generally uninhabited neighbouring islands. When you cast anchor in the bays of these uninhabited islands (for example Maun), you may quite possibly see the sheep come down to the beach in the evening to drink water from the sea. It is supposedly this and the saline meadows that give the cheese its distinctive taste. Another interesting feature are the olive trees – some up to 1500 years old – around Lun at the northwest end of Pag. As on the other Croatian islands, the production of olive oil is an important part of the economy.

Located in central Dalmatia (about an hour's drive from Zadar), Pag is the ideal starting point for cruises both short and long. In deciding on the "Longtop" Sedan – i.e. the model with an extended roof over the cockpit – we were influenced by our previous experience in the area: intense sunshine, which not only heats up the sea significantly (in June already up to 28° C) but can also be hard on the skipper and his crew. So our chosen model is also



suitable for pale-skinned northern Europeans! However, this kind of boat is not very frequent in the Adriatic, and we have already become accustomed to being gazed at

in every harbour that we visit. Even the owners of sleek yachts have to admit that the Linssen offers an impressive degree of comfort. That also applies in rough seas and conditions that are a challenge for sailors and that keep those fast, sleek yachts in the harbour.

So much for our boat. In June 2014, we used the first part of our stay in Croatia for some short trips, which we'd like to tell you about. From the ACI Marina at Simuni, we set a course of 330° past the lively harbour town of Novalja – popular especially among younger visitors to Croatia – and past the island of Pag to Rab. To starboard, we could see the ancient olive trees around Lun that we already mentioned. Near the headland lies the sleepy little village of Tovarnele. Drawing level with the buoys marking the shallows, we changed course to 350° and sailed directly into the bay at Cifnata. The sandy bottom is ideal for anchoring, and although the bay is frequented by day-trippers, they leave in the evening in small yachts or taxi boats. We reached this intermediate destination at a leisurely 5,5 knots in just under 5 hours, and prepared for the night. We enjoyed the quiet of the evening and after breakfast set course the next morning for the harbour at Rab (44° 45' N, 14° 46' E). We were greeted there by the four striking bell towers of the historic centre, which is built on a steep rocky ridge. At the harbour entrance, we came across a whole armada of boats both large and small – like a swarm of mosquitoes – that were on their way to the numerous bathing inlets. That was fine by us, because it meant more space in the harbour. The marina is situated opposite the quay of the town's harbour and is a very convenient place to moor. But for an hourly charge of 20 kunas (about EUR 2.50) you can also moor alongside the quay itself. The Linssen's bow and stern thrusters meant that "parking" was not any problem. The advantage of mooring by the quay is that you have easy access to the town centre: you don't have to walk around the harbour basin as you do if you tie up in the marina. Rab is over 2000 years old, and with narrow lanes and many churches has a special flair all of its own. With Rovinj and Zadar, it counts as an historic and cultural gem of northern Croatia. There are numerous excellent restaurants, but we will mention only two. One is the stylish "Paradiso", in the old town loggia and the Cernota Palace, which also has its own picture gallery, which the owner is happy to show to visitors. The slivovitz and the house wine are both produced by the restaurant itself. The link with the coast is also shown in various items that give the restaurant its exclusive atmosphere.

The "Rab" tavern is in a rustic but refined style. With its wooden beams and a welcoming gallery, it has a tradi-



tional atmosphere and its excellent but inexpensive dishes make it really worth a visit. It's striking that younger people in Croatia prefer to communicate in English, while older people usually understand German better. But basically, there are no communication problems. On this cruise, by the way, there were five of us on board the Linszen, but none of us felt there was too little room. One reason is of course that the cockpit offers plenty of space, although a cover needs to be put up if it rains.

After a good meal and some extensive sightseeing, we left Rab in the evening so as to spend the night at Cifnata again. Next morning we set a course 253° for the island of Cres. During the crossing, we were in fact caught out by a moderate Bora wind, making it seem sensible to stop over and spend the night in the bay of Toveračica on Cres. That also made things a bit easier for our guests, who weren't such experienced sailors. Next day, we rounded the island to the southeast and sailed comfortably through the Lofinjanski Channel, with Cres to starboard and Lofinj to port, to the little town of Osor. At Osor, the islands of Cres and Losinj are separated by a canal – only 11 metres wide – that was constructed more than 2000 years ago. The bridge over the canal is opened twice a day, at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. For the vessels that are waiting, there is an area with buoys and a clearly marked navigation channel. The buoys enabled us to tie up and use our Zodiac dinghy to go ashore. The Zodiac is equipped with a 4 hp Torpedo electric outboard motor, allowing for elegant and almost silent operation.

In Roman times, Osor was a strategically important centre with about 20,000 inhabitants, because the sea route from Aquileia to Salona passed through the Osor Canal. Surrounded by strong defensive walls, it was the site of numerous temples, a forum, theatres, and palaces. The harbour was the base for Ravenna's navy, and in 530 AD, the town became the seat of a bishop. It was later devastated by the Saracens and sank into insignificance. To-

day's Osor is a village of scarcely 100 residents, with ancient remains that are well worth seeing.

We continued on a course of 148° past Losinj to starboard and Orjule to port to the island of Ilovik. At the south-eastern tip of Losinj there is a small uninhabited island, Kozjak, which we rounded, keeping it to port and looking for a suitable bay to anchor off the west side of Ilovik. We decided to anchor in the bay of Pažine in the south of the island and to finish the day there.

Next morning, we set a course of 132° for Ugljan, passing by Silba (to port) and Premuda and Ist (to starboard). At the southern tip of the island of Silba we had to correct our course again slightly so as to pass Sestrunj (to starboard), with the offshore islands of the Tri Sestrice, to reach the island of Ugljan. We moored at the "Olive Island" marina at Sutomiscica, a brand-new marina leaving nothing to be desired.

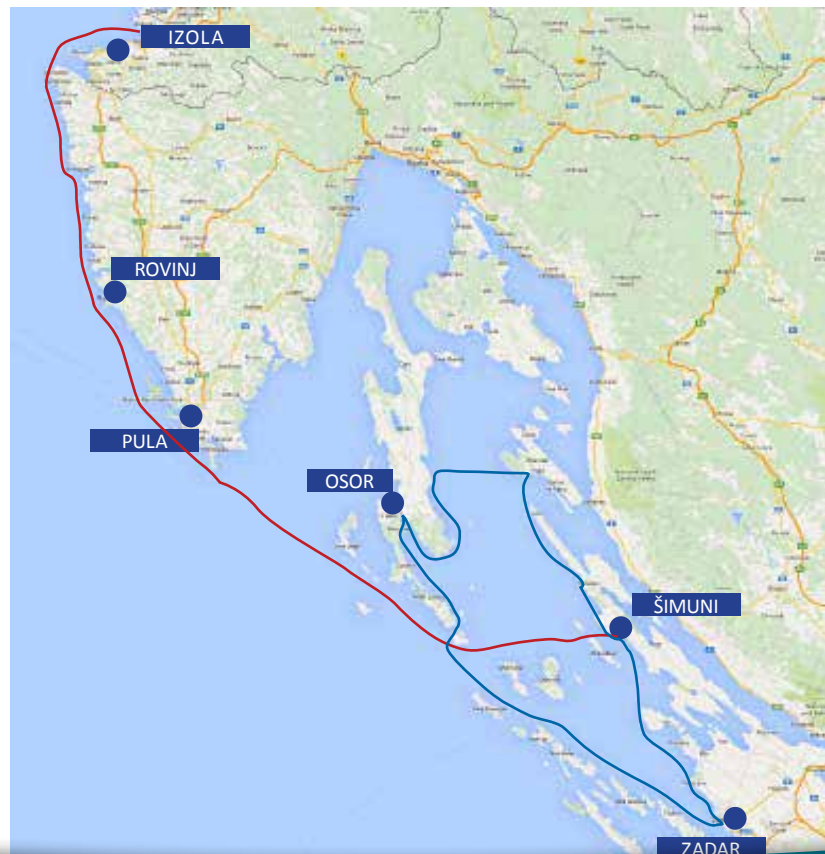
After a restful night in the marina and after replenishing our stores (including water) we set course for Zadar. Ugljan and Zadar are separated by the Pafimanski Channel, which we crossed in less than an hour, tying up at the town's marina. Getting into this marina is a tight squeeze, and a bit of a challenge for a 40-foot vessel. The Linszen is somewhat cumbersome, but using its bow and stern thrusters enabled us to moor without problems, although without the additional rudder, things would have been extremely difficult. We can't really recommend this marina because it is extremely expensive and crowded. Although we were only moored for a few hours so we could do some sightseeing, we were immediately charged for 24 hours (including for unnecessary water and electricity!), whereas at all the other marinas there is also a charge for just half a day. So what you need to do is either stay for the whole time you've paid for or go to the Borik marina instead. As we've already seen, Zadar is a real gem and very much worth visiting. It's no wonder that the AIDA cruise ships put in here too. The ferries that are constantly coming and going also need a lot of space, so we were glad – especially after our days of peace and tranquillity – to get away from the hustle and bustle.

On the way back to the island of Pag, we once more moored off the island of Vir, and could admire a spectacular sunset, which compensated for the stress at Zadar. One thing that this cruise showed us is that the Longtop model of the Grand Sturdy Sedan is ideal as far as we're concerned for sailing in this area. Croatia's membership of the EU has led to changes in the conditions for yachts. The important thing now is no longer the length of the vessel but the power of the engine. That made this year's permit significantly cheaper than in the past.

CROATIA: AMONG EUROPE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL AREAS FOR CRUISING

The Hippo has an engine speed of from 1800 to 1850 revs per minute, producing 5.5 to 6 knots (diesel consumption: about 5 litres per hour). That is rather slow compared to the usual yachts in the Adriatic, but we're not in any hurry. People often talk of "slowing down and starting living" – that's what we actually managed to do! In return, the boat is extremely reliable, and remains docile even in rough seas. There's enough space even when you have guests on board, and we have come to appreciate the storage space too. A Fritz!Box and the connected stick allowed us to connect up with the rest of the world via the Internet, and there was a stable WLAN network on board for our mobile phones, iPad, and other devices. We hadn't thought about installing an additional external antenna for all this, so we had to make do with an after-market antenna with a magnetic base, which we extended out through the sliding roof in areas with a weak signal. When sailing in this area, I advise bow and stern thrusters and auto pilot. We also think it's absolutely necessary to be able to cover the cockpit with a cover during bad weather.

Finally, we would like to record that Linssen doesn't just build top-quality vessels but also provides a first-class service. That more or less guarantees that the "best weeks of the year" will be just what we want, namely totally relaxing!



NORWAY

An impressive **CRUISING AREA**



Text and photographs by André Suntjens

Norway captures the imagination of many holidaymakers – regardless of whether they're travelling by motor home, car, motorbike or boat. Norway is a great country, whether you like walking, winter sports, fishing, culture or sailing. It's a unique opportunity and a great privilege to tour this impressive cruising area in a fantastic Linssen Grand Sturdy 500 AC Variotop.

On Whit Monday, 25 May 2015, the ЧЕРНЫЙ ПАУК II (Black Spider II), a Grand Sturdy 500 AC Variotop Mark II, pulled out of the Nautilus marina in Roermond. On board were Alexander (owner), Kris (his girlfriend), Michela (a member of Alexander's staff), André Suntjens (captain) and his partner Henriette Scheepers.

Once they arrived in Oslo, only André and Henriette would be remaining on board until the return journey to the Netherlands, sometime in August/September...

PREPARATIONS

We would be undertaking a trip with an unplanned route so as to be able to anticipate weather conditions. Later, during the trip, we found that long-term forecasts (for one week ahead) were not always reliable, especially in terms of wind

force. Our preparations included navigation charts, safety equipment, spare parts, provisions and clothing because it is even hard to predict the temperature and likelihood of rain in this northerly part of Europe.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

Having listened to the weather forecasts and studied them carefully, we decided not to take the much faster route via Heligoland and the west coast of Denmark, but an alternative route via Groningen to Delfzijl and then set course, via the river Ems, for Cuxhaven on the Ems in the hope that the north-westerly wind would drop in the German Bight. However, this didn't happen, so we sailed into Emden to take the Ems-Jade Canal to Wilhelmshaven, a very rural and narrow canal with a lot of bridges and country smells. We spent the night in Cuxhaven before sailing into the Kiel canal via Brunsbüttel

lock; at the waiting place there we called up "Kiel Canal I" and waited for the continuous white light! The canal is almost 100 km long with the Kiel-Holtenau lock at the end: there we called "Kiel Canal IV" and again waited for the continuous white light to indicate that we could enter.

LABOE

For us, Laboe was the starting point of our actual adventure through the unknown cruising areas of Denmark and Norway. About the same size as the Netherlands, Denmark consists of the large Jutland peninsula with a few hundred small islands around it, so it has a long coastline with many beaches. On the eastern side, where we were sailing, were a few fjords, flatter and more wooded than their counterparts in Norway. We decided to sail round Lolland and the first Danish port we entered was Kragenaes, a small marina/harbour

Oslo



in an area with hardly any infrastructure. These southern islands are also known as “the South of the North” because of their mild climate. And, indeed, the weather was glorious and sunny. We then sailed north of the islands of Fejø and Femø, which was a circuitous route but there was no alternative due to the shallow water. This route through the Masnedsund and the Ulvsund was very narrow in places and only partially buoyed. The old saying “to sail here you need strong belief and wide feet” definitely applies to this cruising area, which is full of hazardous shallows. Good navigation charts are by no means an unnecessary luxury. It therefore became an exciting, but also interesting, day trip to our next stop, Fakse Ladeplads. This was another small harbour in a charming rural setting. Just as in a number of the harbours that followed, it had precisely one mooring that was big enough.

COPENHAGEN

It is of course worth spending a few days in Copenhagen. Having sailed past the Little Mermaid, the statue based on Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale (which, incidentally, was smaller than we had imagined), we found a mooring at the Nyhavn quay. Copenhagen is linked to Sweden by the Øresund Bridge, which is almost 8 km in length. We stayed in the city for three days, wandering through the shopping district and enjoying the sunny weather on the convivial and bustling terraces in front of the colourful restaurants.

The next leg we had planned was to Anholt, a small island in the middle of the Kattegat. The wind forecast was 4-5 Beaufort westerly, but the sea quickly became rough, with steep, short and high waves. As a result of different currents meeting there, the water in the Kattegat and Skagerrak often becomes very

turbulent. The power and violence of the water is awesome and if you are not properly secured, you will literally be thrown back and forth. Although the stabilisers do ease the conditions, our guiding principle is that all members of the crew should sail in comfort. In order to avoid the still considerable swell, we turned 90 degrees to starboard and headed for Mölle (Sweden). It was the right decision and we sailed into the small and very welcoming harbour with a great sigh of relief.

You have to be flexible when sailing. Sweden was not originally on the programme, but you have to be flexible when sailing... Despite the wind, we had a pleasant trip to Anholt with the waves diagonally on the bow. Anholt is one of the “never-visit-in-season” ports, with boats moored up to eight rows deep. It’s a fishing port and, like many Scandinavian ports, has a barbecue area which anyone can use. It’s a charming small island with only 160 inhabitants and an unspoiled beach but, unfortunately, it also rains quite often. Onwards to Skagen, the last stop before Norway, or at least that’s what we thought. But after leaving the fishing port of Skagen, where dozens of sea-going vessels lay at anchor, we sailed north along the peninsula and quickly decided to alter course to Stavern, to the Swedish coast. After all, we were not in a hurry and this way we would be sailing the last stretch well sheltered between the hundreds of small islands.

THOUSANDS OF SMALL ISLANDS

The Norwegian and Swedish coast consists of thousands of small islands, known as the skerries. Many are uninhabited and some are connected to the mainland or a larger island by a bridge. You often see only one or two houses at the water’s edge and a boat is therefore an essential requirement for making

contact with the rest of the world. This multitude of islands and the tideless sea makes it a relatively sheltered cruising area.

But it is often a maze and, without good, up-to-date navigation equipment, you will become hopelessly lost or fix a wrong position. Sailing here requires concentration, but this is also necessary on open, rough seas. During the last few miles to Strömstad, again in Sweden, we were even escorted by the Swedish water police, who were coming to check our documents and the boat in the harbour. It was probably the Russian name on our yacht that caught their attention. Of course, everything was OK. Strömstad is very popular with Norwegian alcohol tourists who come here by the shipload (including with ColourLine/StenaLine) to really stock up. Norway is not a member of the EU and the importation of alcohol and cigarettes to Norway is limited to a certain amount per person. The price of alcoholic drinks is kept artificially high by the government in order to minimise consumption, but the result is that people sometimes take refuge in home-made drinks...

OSLOFJORD

The next day, while we were on our way to Oslo, we were subjected to another check in the Oslofjord, this time by Norwegian customs, who came aboard to check very thoroughly for alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. However, it was a very friendly occasion and, with hindsight, we could have used a few hidden rooms...

As we approached Oslo, the fjord became narrower and the surroundings even more impressive.

On the advice of the Norwegian customs officers, we called at the Aker Brygge marina, near the centre, and this was indeed a good suggestion. It was situated in a great location near the waterfront but it was particu-



Harbour entrance, Strömstad

larly busy. We later found out that a regatta with 200 participating sailing yachts would be starting the next day. Despite this, we were allocated a fantastic mooring. All of us spent two more days on board until we (Henriette and André) “had to” stay behind on our own. Every day we explored Oslo and the surrounding area on foot or by bicycle and did a lot of sightseeing.

We gradually learned more about the Norwegians and the city itself: Norwegians (as we got to know them) are friendly, somewhat reserved initially and helpful; they speak perfect English (second language); they generally have a fairly high standard of living and usually have a holiday home or polyester yacht somewhere in Norway. They are rightly really proud of their own country (which they show by flying the Norwegian flag). They are very positive about Dutch people and all have some kind of connection with our country.

Oslo is home to 10% of the 6 million Norwegians. It’s a lively, exciting city with many cultural attractions within walking distance. It has fantastic, busy shopping streets such as Karl Johans Gate, with street theatre, musicians, artists and stalls. The city is also a popular destination for many large cruise liners. What is noticeable, in the negative sense, are the many beggars who sit at every street corner, almost all of them from the Eastern Bloc countries, to the annoyance of the Norwegians. This has now become a priority issue for the government.

AKER BRYGGE

Aker Brygge marina is situated on the bustling waterfront in a shopping and entertainment district. The name is taken from a shipyard which went bankrupt in 1980, after which the whole district was the subject of an ambitious conversion. The marina was renovated some years ago and is now a place in which to be seen.

It’s actually typical of all Norwegian marinas, which are accessible to everyone. They don’t have fences around them. Harbour dues are to standard level, except in the bigger cities (Aker Brygge is very expensive but you can negotiate the price if you’re staying for longer). Water is included, which means you are allowed to use drinking water to wash the salt off your boat. Passing boaters can often moor free of charge during the day to go shopping, fill up with water and recharge the batteries (EU connector). The bigger marinas are well equipped and there is almost always a place available. Many harbours don’t have a harbour master and we had to pay by debit or credit card at the pay station.

As soon as we arrived in Oslo we were surprised by the very short nights (it only gets dark for two hours). In order to avoid problems getting to sleep, we taped over the portholes in our cabin with black



Marina Aker Brygge, Oslo



Bergen

plastic during our stay in Norway. It's lucky we brought rubbish sacks with us...

ONWARDS TO BERGEN!

We thought it would be a particularly nice trip to sail via the south coast to Bergen, as it's a city that everyone should see. As far as Kristiansand, we sailed through a magnificent area with a lot of islands and a lot of sunshine, some days with the Variotop open in the very clean air under a massive blue sky. It was a fascinating landscape with an enchanting sea surrounding countless smooth islands that turned red with the setting sun. Sometimes we sailed over wide stretches of water and then through narrow passages with clear water and breathing in the very clean air. You don't get bored for an instant and it's really fantastic to sail through these island formations instead of following the coastline on the open sea. These skerry coasts form an impressive natural landscape and are a Valhalla for boating enthusiasts. They often have terraces, barbecue areas and walking routes which can be easily reached by dinghy. You have to remain alert when sailing between the islands and along the skerry coasts even if you have detailed navigation charts and recent plotter charts. In shallow places, there is a black pole on the rock below to indicate shallows. Above water there is often a sort of

signpost to indicate which side of the pole you have to pass on – keep your distance and go slowly! Things can therefore get quite tense when sailing through narrow passages. Also worthy of note are the small harbours and anchorages and the many wooden houses, mostly painted brown, yellow, red and green.

THE OLDEST TOWN IN NORWAY

We visited Tønsberg, which – according to its residents – is the oldest town in Norway. It has the only lift bridge we saw in Norway. In Stavern, there was a pleasant harbour with a fantastic female harbourmaster who was particularly helpful. It was there that we attended the celebrations for the longest day, when a large bonfire is set alight when the sun reaches its lowest point – a tradition in Norway. In the harbour, we encountered a Linssen Grand Sturdy 40.9 AC, the Odegard.

In the white town of Risør we had a bar opposite us with a magnificent Scottish-themed interior. There, a rock whitewashed by the Dutch in the 17th century was used as a navigation sign for the seafarers of that time.

Arendal has a pleasant town harbour, with the old town of Tyholmen and the customs island of Merdø. This island has no roads, but it is particularly authentic, with a living open-air museum. In summer, it's the hotspot for the local population.

Kristiansand, Norway's fifth-largest city, is a popular holiday destination for the Norwegians themselves and has a large fish market (fiskebrygga). By now we had almost reached the most southerly point of Norway and would therefore be going north to Bergen along the west coast.

However, there are few marinas on this stretch until Stavanger and the usual northerly or westerly wind can play tricks on you. We therefore remain alert to the wind forecasts. We sailed to Flekkefjord, a trip that took almost twelve hours via a glorious navigation route through the fjord. There was a tiny harbour in an otherwise abandoned village. No restaurants were open, even on a Saturday! A salmon farm caused some confusion as it was not shown on the chart, but there were hundreds more to follow.

The following morning, after an hour of sailing, we sailed into a thick fog, which accompanied us for the rest of the day. We now had to rely on radar, and AIS in particular. We had previously found that AIS is a fantastic navigation aid for avoiding dangerous situations.

We reached Stavanger. It's a pleasant town, but unfortunately we were there just too early for the Gladmat (a massive food festival).

LYSEFJORDEN

Although Bergen was in sight, we

decided to take a detour via the Lysefjord with its world-famous Preikestolen (Pulpit Rock), Kjerag (suspended boulder) and Flørli stairway. This stairway is 1,470 metres long and has a gradient of 740 metres. It has 4,444 steps and is one of the longest in the world. Henriette went up 100 of these steps (due to lack of time of course...). After spending the night in Lysebotn deep inside the fjord, we went to Skartveit on the island of Halsnøya. We visited it because of a publication that we had seen. It was primitive in the nicest sense of the word and authentic, with great people. We spent two days there.

Population of 110 and one car Haugesund has a harbour seafront but the town centre is very run-down. We had a VIP place at the quay during the "Iron Man", a triathlon in a European competition which was being held at the time. We took a boat trip to the island of Røvaer which has a population of 110 and, apart from one car, is completely car-free. We went via Leirvik and Uskedalen to Norheimsund in the Hardangerfjord, which has pleasant harbour. Osøyro was our last stop before Bergen.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

In Bergen, we had a mooring at the quay in Bryggen, the striking view of the town that appears on the UNESCO World Heritage List. With a relatively small centre, this colourful town has a rich heritage dating from

the times of the Hanseatic League and the status of European city of culture. There's a lively but expensive fish market. We eventually stayed there for six days without a spot of rain, despite the fact that Bergen is known for its rainy weather...

The city is situated between seven hills, two of which we climbed, one of them up 900 steps made of boulders and we thought that was an achievement. A visit to this city is really worthwhile. Norway's biggest fjord, the Sognefjord, begins just to the north of the city.

BACK TO OSLO

We decided to sail back to Oslo along the coast at a relaxed pace and we also called in at a few places we had already visited. New stops for us were Fitjar, Egersund and Mandal. Fitjar is situated near perhaps the most beautiful area of skerries in Norway, which has attractive, idyllic anchorages. Norway has many skerries, but not as many as Sweden. Egersund is a large fishing port with a long entrance and Mandal is a pleasant town, where we spent three days.

Henriette flew home once we were back in Oslo as she was about to become a grandma for the second time and naturally wanted to be with her daughter. This meant I had to spend three weeks alone on board in Oslo until Alexander and Chris flew over for the return journey. However, it is certainly no trial to remain behind alone in this location. The Grand Sturdy 500 with Variotop

appeared to be a real object of curiosity. I received many compliments and had to explain 287 times why the boat had a Russian name, combined with a Dutch flag.

Because the wind forecasts were initially very favourable to take the shortest return route along the west coast of Denmark via Harlingen or Den Helder, Henk, a friend, flew in so as to be able to sail back with three skippers (two on and one off). However, on the day before our departure, storm warnings were issued for Heligoland, so we changed the plan and returned via the east coast again. After all, you have to be flexible when sailing. We sailed thirty hours non-stop from Oslo to Grenaa via Skagen and then in day trips to Juelsminde, Sønderborg, Holtenau (the Kiel lock was out of service!), Cuxhaven, Norderney (the north German Wadden Sea), Groningen, Burgum, Volendam and Amsterdam, where Alexander was attending a conference.

In early October, we sailed into our temporary home port at Nautilus Roermond, happy but a little homesick.

Stavanger



Haugesund



Norway on a Grand Sturdy 500 Variotop® Mark III

BERGEN NORHEIMSUND

STAVANGER

KRISTIANSAND

LANGSUND

OSLO

STRÖMSTAD

SKAGEN

ANHOLT

KOPENHAGEN

LABOE

GRONINGEN

KAMPEN

MAASBRACHT

A few of the many interesting places to see:

Copenhagen:

The Little Mermaid

Sweden:

Anholt island (www.visitanholt.dk)

Norway:

Oslo (www.visitoslo.com)

Aker Brygge (www.akerbrygge.no/marina)

Tønsberg (www.visittonsberg.com)

Risør (www.risor.kommune.no)

Kristiansand (www.kristiansand.no)

Lysefjord (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysefjord)

Bergen (www.visitbergen.com)



Text: Luc Vanthoor (LBH partner Aqua Libra); photographs Luc Vanthoor/Zebra Fotostudio's

IT CAN'T JUST BE A COINCIDENCE, CAN IT?

IT SURELY CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE THAT LINSSEN YACHTS ARE BUILT IN A REGION WHICH IS A BYWORD FOR HIGH-QUALITY LEISURE PURSUITS. IT SURELY CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE THAT THE VALUES THAT THE LINSSEN FAMILY HOLDS DEAR ARE REFLECTED IN THE REGION THEY COME FROM.

For over sixty years, Linssen yachts have been built in Maasbracht and one of Maasbracht's key features is that it is situated at the centre of one of the most varied cruising areas in Europe: the Meuse Lakes. With a surface area of 3,000 hectares, it's the largest continuous boating area in Belgium and the Netherlands. An area known for its hospitality, good quality of life and rich traditions.

The Meuse Lakes are situated on the border between Belgium and the Netherlands and separate the two countries for a great deal of their length. They are only (or less than) an hour's drive from cities such as Maastricht, Eindhoven, Roermond, Düsseldorf, Aachen, Duisburg, Antwerp and Brussels.

Since 2012 it has been possible for anyone to explore this region on a Linssen yacht. This is because Aqua Libra Yachtcharter, a partner in the Linssen Boating Holidays network, operates from the De Spaanjerd Marina in Belgian Limburg. Its home port is only three kilometres from the Linssen boatyard as the crow flies. So it's ideal if, for

example, you want to extend your visit to the boatyard by adding a sailing holiday or enhance your holiday experience by visiting your yacht's "birthplace".

RICH HISTORY

It's a region with a rich history. The oldest signs of habitation date from the age of the Neanderthal people and can mostly be found in the south of the province. This region is rich in marlstone caves and is very hilly. You can still visit some of these marlstone caves even today. In the town of Valkenburg you can even ride through the caverns on a little train 70 metres below the ground.

Cities such as Maastricht (Mosa Trajectum), Heerlen (Coriovallum) and Tongeren (Tungria) were founded when the Romans ruled the region. After the period of Roman rule, the region fell under the control of the Franks and became part of the Holy Roman Empire.

The two Limburgs were often the scene of battle in conflicts between dukes and bishops in the Middle Ages,

becoming completely fragmented in the process. It was divided up among the grand dukes of Brabant, Gelre and Gulik and the prince-bishops of Liège and Cologne.

THORN – THE WHITE TOWN

A good example of this is the historic white town of Thorn. The history of this charming small town can be traced back to the end of the 10th century. Over time, Thorn developed into a miniature principality, ruled over by an abbess and twenty ladies of noble birth. The statelet had its own legal system and minted its own coins. Aristocratic young ladies from across the region received a strict and pious education in the Benedictine convent. The arrival of the French in 1794 put an end to Thorn's autonomy.

Thorn is situated next to one of the many gravel lakes along the Meuse. You can moor just three hundred metres from the centre of Thorn, which is an urban conservation area. The town's main attractions are its cobbled streets, the majestic Abbey Church and the "Land van Thorn" museum. You can round off your visit with a delicious pancake enjoyed at one of Thorn's many pavement cafés.

After the Middle Ages, the region around the Meuse came under Spanish and then French rule. French rule came to

an end in 1815 when Napoleon was defeated at the famous Battle of Waterloo by the Prussians, Dutch, British and Hanoverians. From that date, the region became part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Meuse has always played a very important part in the geographical distribution of the region. For example, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 decided the border between the Netherlands and Belgium on the basis of the distance travelled by a cannon shot, as measured from the Meuse. Even today, the deepest point of the Meuse still forms a substantial part of the border between Belgium and the Netherlands.

THE CREATION OF THE MEUSE LAKES

The Meuse Lakes were created by the extraction of gravel from the Meuse Valley, mainly in the 20th century. The excavation of the gravel deposits, left behind by a glacier during the last ice age, caused large lakes to form, almost all of which are connected to the Meuse. Some gravel lakes are up to 40 metres deep and two to three kilometres across. The towns and villages around the Meuse Lakes quickly discovered their added value in terms of tourism. The lake shores are lined with a number of hotels and restaurants, modern marinas, bathing beaches,



nature reserves and even a few diving locations thanks to the fact that the water is extremely clear. Anglers will find a number of excellent pitches in the region, from which they can fish for pike, pike perch, eel, carp and all species of whitefish.

The Meuse Lakes region is one of a kind because it has “something for everyone”. It is also situated in the centre of Europe, means that it is very easily accessible by land, air or water. You can literally explore “the four points of the compass” from this region. Travel upstream on the Meuse towards Maastricht, Liège, Namur, Dinant and Northern France or set out from Namur via Charleroi through Brussels along the world-famous Ronquières Inclined Plane boat lift. Travel downstream on the Meuse and reach the IJsselmeer or Friesland within three days via the Waal and IJssel. You can also travel further down the Meuse and sail to Zeeland via the Biesbosch nature reserve. Maybe you would prefer the historic canals of Northern Belgium which you can reach via the Zuid-Willemsvaart Canal on its popular Willems Route. If you don't like visiting the same place twice, you can check out a number of round trips mapped out on the website www.aqua-libra.be.

A holiday in the Meuse Lakes region is like a cocktail that you mix yourself. It is up to you to mix the right ingredients in the correct ratios. The main ingredients are history, culture, nature, gastronomy and shopping.

You can find history and culture in places such as the former miniature principality of Thorn or the cathedral city of Roermond. Towns such as Maaseik with the oldest pharmacy in the Benelux countries and Maastricht with its 1,660 listed buildings reflect the historical richness of this region. The whole region is dotted with wonderful windmills and watermills, typical farmhouses, castles and many listed buildings where you can experience the historical richness almost at first hand.

A holiday in the Meuse Lakes region is like a cocktail that you mix yourself

THE MAASLAND TERROIR

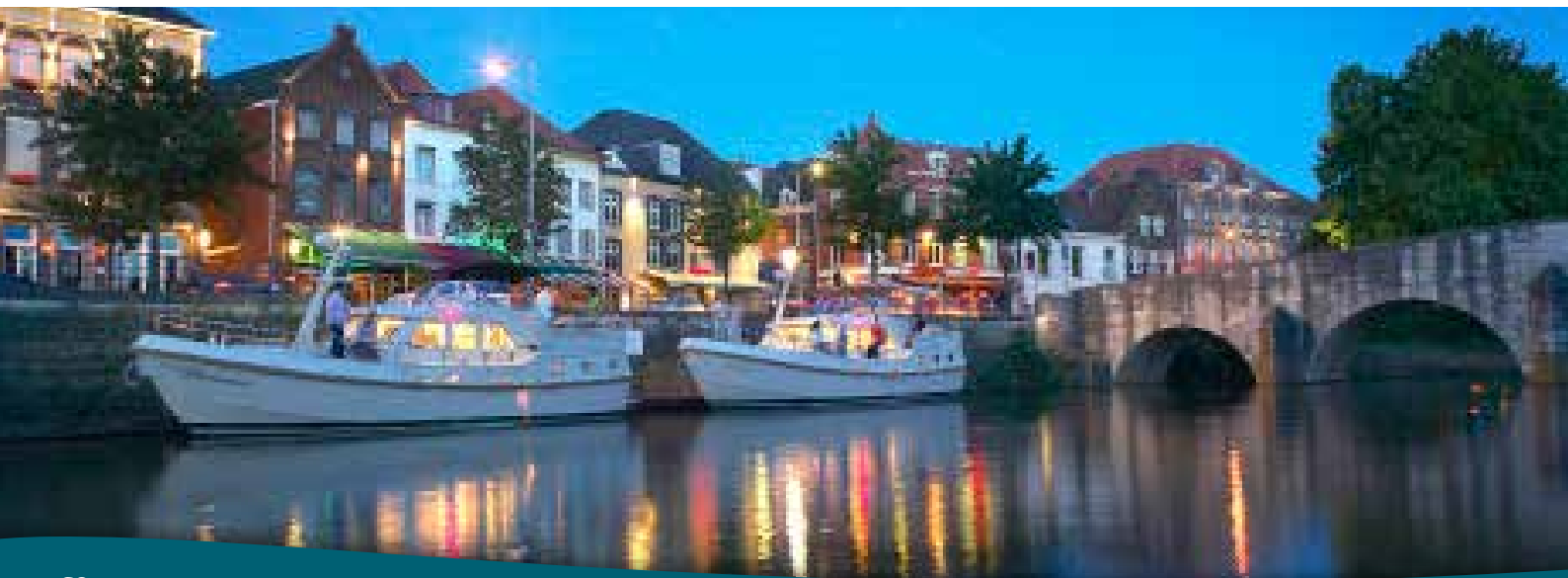
Wine lovers can “taste” the Maasland terroir in the wine domains of Thorn or Aldeneyck, both of which are within walking distance of the water. Both domains produce high-quality wines. For example, the Pinot Brut from the Aldeneyck domain was voted Belgium's best sparkling wine in 2012. The whole region is characterised by its culinary riches, with Belgium's versatile beer culture and local produce including asparagus, pike perch and the “Maaseycker knapkoek” cake. For demanding gastronomic connoisseurs, there are exclusive restaurants within walking distance of the water. A total of eleven Michelin stars, spread over nine restaurants, twinkle over the Meuse Lakes region. For example, the 2-star Da Vinci restaurant in Maasbracht is situated along the water's edge, only a stone's throw from the Linszen boatyard.

NATURE CONSERVATION AREAS

Nature lovers can find peace and quiet in nature conservation areas where wild Konik horses and Galloway cattle form part of the scenery. Beavers, swans, herons and over sixty other species of waterfowl are also much in evidence. The two Limburgs have a total of three national nature reserves which are directly linked to the fairway by the famous network of cycle routes.

The Meuse Lakes region is like one big holiday park in which you can spice up your boating holiday with a rich bouquet of leisure pursuits for young and old alike.

Enjoy a Dame Blanche, a Trappist or a Kriekenbier at one of the many open-air cafés along the water's edge with a view of the boats gliding past. Combine your boating holiday with an expedition on the network of cycle routes which connects hundreds of kilometres of cycling pleasure with a series of interchanges. In most of the marinas in the Meuse Lakes region, you can get hold of a bicycle



free of charge or on payment of a small fee. Or let your children or grandchildren hire a canoe or pedal boat from one of the many sailing schools. Have a try at casting a line and catching a fish on the end of your hook. Enjoy the unique atmosphere in one of the region's forty marinas. You can combine your boating holiday with a day's shopping in Roermond or Weert. Roermond is a particular favourite with shoppers from near and far thanks to its Designer Outlet Shopping Centre which is known far beyond national boundaries and attracts 4 million visitors annually. There are moorings in the immediate vicinity of this impressive shopping centre.

LOCKS AND CANALS

There's one lock between Maaseik and Roermond in the Meuse Lakes region. This lock at Linne has a 4-metre drop and is used almost exclusively by pleasure craft. During the tourist boating season, you can count on the assistance of lock stewards as you pass through the lock. If you want to leave the Meuse Lakes region by canal, take the Panheel lock towards Weert or the Maasbracht lock towards Maastricht. These locks have a high drop, but their "floating bollards" make them easy to use. There is little commercial shipping in the region. Only the lock at Maasbracht is used regularly by commercial shipping.

THE WILLEMS ROUTE

Choose the Panheel lock to get on to the Willems Route with many destinations in the Belgian Kempen area or even reach 's Hertogenbosch in one day. This Willems Route, which is mainly known as a very peaceful fairway, is lined with small harbours right next to each other as if on a string of pearls.

During your trip along the Willems Route you should certainly visit the old garrison town of Leopoldsburg, which you reach via the historic Beverlo canal. Lommel, the "glass town", is another stop that should not be missing from your schedule. In Bocholt you will find the largest brewery museum in Europe only five minutes' walk from the harbour. Neeroeteren has a particularly charming little harbour in the middle of the countryside in an old canal branch and, in the old mining town of Maasmechelen, you step straight off your boat into the Maasmechelen Village Outlet Centre. After an afternoon's shopping, you can take in a film at the cinema which is situated next to the shopping centre. Once past Maasmechelen, you reach the most beautiful village in Flanders, Rekem, where you will have an impressive view of Aspremont-Lynden Castle.

LOCK 19, MAASTRICHT

You pass through the manually operated Lock 19 to reach the 't Bassin marina, right in the centre of Maastricht.

From Maastricht you can return to the Meuse Lakes region or continue your journey to Northern France via Liège, Namur and Dinant.

The best thing of all about this cruising area is the fact that it is still little known. There is almost always space in the little harbours and you sometimes believe that you are alone in the world when cruising. The hospitality of the Limburgers is another of the great advantages that guarantee the success of a holiday in this region. This is partly because there is no language barrier. Most Limburgers, particularly those working in the tourism sector, speak German, English and also some French in addition to their mother tongue.

In this article and the accompanying photographs we wanted to show you what's on the menu for this boating area in Belgium and the Netherlands. It's now up to you to select the dishes from this menu and taste them.



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The Meuse lakes





Text & photographs: Doris and Dr. Lorenzo Guendel

A CRUISING REGION FOR LOVERS OF NATURE AND CULTURE

BOUNDED BY THE BALTIC IN THE NORTH, THE ODER IN THE EAST, THE ELBE IN THE WEST, THE LOWER HAVEL IN THE SOUTH WEST AND THE SPREE-ODER CANAL IN THE SOUTH EAST, THIS REGION IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE LARGEST CRUISING AREAS IN EUROPE.

Well over 2,700 km of interconnected lakes, rivers and canals form an inexhaustible, dense network of navigable waterways of differing sizes. Most of them are located in the Länder of Berlin, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, one of the regions of Germany which is most steeped in history, whether it's the history of the Hanseatic League, the noble Junkers of Western Pomerania, the Prussian kings or the influence of Dutch princesses and craftsmen. Russian and French cultural influences can be observed everywhere – even Vienna has a share in it. The result is a region with unparalleled variety and diversity in terms of art and history.

The route is lined with big cities such as Berlin and Hamburg, as well as medium-sized towns such as Lübeck, Rostock, Stettin, Oranienburg, Potsdam, Brandenburg and Magdeburg. Art lovers seeking cultural diversity will feel right at home here. Take Potsdam as an example, where the influence of the Dutch and Russian colonies is particularly in evidence, even today. If you are interested in history, you need only follow in the tracks of Humboldt or “Old Fritz” (Frederick the Great) to Sanssouci palace.

This has continued into most recent German history, as witness the Potsdam Conference in Cecilienhof Palace or Templin, the municipality in which the current German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, was married.

Those interested in literature are warmly invited to visit Theodor Fontane or Kurt Tucholsky. But it's not only these luminaries of German literature who can be found here.

Museums, art galleries and major collections give way to small art studios, so that you can for example watch an artisan blacksmith or string instrument maker at work in the citadel in Spandau. There are also many aspects of regional history, which children and young people in particular find especially different and interesting. Examples include the inland waterway museum in Zehdenick and the Ziegeleipark industrial museum in Mildenberg.

Now 80 years old, the Niederfinow boat lift is a special technical miracle of German engineering and has to be experienced.

By contrast, you will find large expanses of unspoilt nature, where you can see herons, cormorants, ospreys, cranes, storks, ducks and great crested grebes, as well as



kingfishers, in their natural habitat.

Besides the large number of birds, you may also catch sight of rarer animals, such as beavers, otters, muskrats, bison, frogs, etc. Also worth a visit, especially for children and young people, is the Müritzeum in Waren, an excellent visitor centre featuring native fauna and flora.

You can go for a dip or while away the time in dreamlike, tranquil anchorages. The canals and rivers are lined by a variety of small towns, where you can stroll, shop and stop off for a while. An impressive range of restaurants have become established in this area, which treat customers with local dishes.

Of course, Berlin also offers a wide diversity of cultural, historical and natural features.

A detailed description is beyond the scope of this report.

We set forth from this fantastic landscape to explore new shores. We had investigated the Lake District after many years and the same applied to Berlin. We now wanted to test Category B on our Linssen 43.9AC "La Cabaña and visit the Baltic. We covered the route from Zehdenick along the Mälzer canal and the Voss canal to Berlin in a few hours and then headed east to the boat lift. We found a nice spot at Marienwerder Marina with Sabine and Lutz Biller when Lutz probably wanted to see whether the crew of La Cabaña could actually control the boat and allocated us a very nice spot right at the back corner. He then watched the manoeuvre very closely with a benevolent eye. As he didn't say anything more, we think he was probably happy. We also thought that we had performed our task well. So we treated ourselves at the marina's bistro. After a wonderfully peaceful night and a hearty breakfast on board, we set off for the boat lift. The passage was uncomplicated but, as so often, a great experience. We shared the lock with two passenger vessels, which didn't cause any problems in the large basin. The temperature had risen mercilessly and it felt like 40°C under the tarpaulin, but we couldn't escape it in the scorching sun. So we opened all the windows we could and we stepped on the gas to produce an air flow. In Oderberg that evening, the neighbours must have thought us a strange crew as we were all below deck in the saloon. Of course, they couldn't have known that we had an excellent air-conditioning system down there. This cooled the two cabins as well as the saloon, which was very

important in ensuring a refreshing sleep. A number of bigger vessels were moored with us in Oderberg, all of which - except one - gradually sailed out the following morning. Finally, we were ready, with the water tank full and batteries charged, everything OK. Temperatures promised to be high that day as well.

The water level reports for the Oder were giving rise to concern in the dry summer, which is why we decided to use the Hohensaartener-Friedrichthaler canal. Considering it's a canal, the journey is surprisingly attractive. There are low embankments to the right and left of the canal, which allow a view of the countryside beyond, with the floodplains of the Oder on the east side and farmland and forest on the west side.

There we discovered large tobacco plantations, which surprised us a lot, a little industry, both old and new, and small but inviting villages. Our destination was Schwedt, which we reached in about four hours. On offer were a small sport marina, which was not deep enough for us, and a bigger pleasure craft marina, which provided a fine mooring. It was any easy choice. This marina was another surprise. It was really well cared-for and housed ultra-clean toilets and showers in an architecturally humorous building and had another nice bistro with a very pleasant all-rounder in charge. Besides the bistro, she was also responsible for the caravan park, the marina, selling shower coins, etc. She was cheerful and helpful despite being very busy. The usual, informative talk on the landing with Oder travellers did provide us with some information which we were able to use later in our trip. However, my desire to obtain a Polish flag as the host country flag remained unfulfilled. We again had to cool the boat to a level that allowed comfortable sleep.

After a delicious dinner and a glass of good red wine, we were ready for bed.

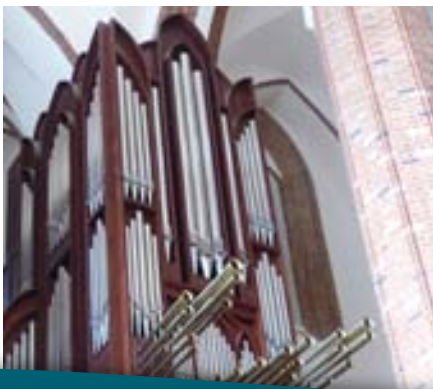
Now 80 years old, the Niederfinow boat lift



SZCZECIN

We were especially looking forward to our next destination, Szczecin. We had heard widely differing reports on the mooring options in Szczecin and were therefore eager to find out the truth. The marina in the centre of Szczecin was highly praised in the legend on our map but we had read and heard criticism elsewhere and so were not convinced. A marina a little further north at the terminus of a tram line was commended, so we went there. Wonderful water meadows accompanied us on our way to Szczecin. The inevitable industrial plants on the outskirts of Szczecin were followed by prominent and very busy docks and shipyards. There was a lot of traffic there. Then came the skyline of the city, with some magnificent buildings and two bridges which were so low that we had to lay not only the mast but also the tarpaulin completely flat. This occupied so much of our attention that we failed to see the city port on the east side of the West Oder. We therefore continued on our way, past more shipyards, until we reached Goclaw marina. The marina is small, clean and has everything you would need, even though parts of it are still very basic. The best thing about it is the small supermarket on the opposite side of the street and the tram station. The staff were particularly friendly, even though they spoke no German at all, which came as a bit of a surprise to us. Using a mixture of English and sign language, we were able to ask them everything and also obtain correct answers to all our questions. I managed to obtain a Polish host country flag from another German boater. The next day was reserved for Szczecin. In the morning, we took the tram into town. We caught an older model, i.e. we arrived in Szczecin half an hour later as if shaken (not stirred!) in a cocktail shaker! Our stroll through the city led us to St. John the Evangelist church, a wonderfully light building with a very beautiful but somewhat

unusual organ. One striking building turned out to be the former castle of the Pomeranian Dukes. It was still blisteringly hot, so we dropped by the small café in the Münzhof courtyard in the castle for a coffee and water. Today, the castle is used for music and art and as a museum and science centre. While we were sitting in the courtyard, we listened to a pianist who was already very proficient in his art. This is also where the tourist information office is located. We then headed for the Haken Terrace, which our guide book boldly claimed is one of the most beautiful terraces in Europe. We couldn't wait to see it and have to admit that it is very beautiful. The view is magnificent. It's about 500 metres long and about 20 metres above the Oder, thereby providing a great view over this part of the city. Behind us was a series of beautiful old buildings, including the Maritime University, the Vovoidship office and the National Museum. In the shadow of these historic buildings, on the Haken Terrace, we found a beautifully situated restaurant (Columbus) where we sat in the front row eating our lunch. Top quality and reasonable prices, including a breathtaking view, was our final verdict on this beautiful spot. From there we then saw the massive marina which we initially missed. It was eerily isolated. There was not a single yacht among the estimated 120 moorings!!! The area around the marina was not exactly chic either and it was extremely awkward to gain access to the city on the other side of the river. We planned to poke our nose into the marina on the return journey. But we wanted to continue on our way. We proceeded north on the Oder, passed the entrance to Dabie Lake and took a second decision to come this way on the return journey. Further north, the waterway forks into the Oder and the Policki Canal, but we stayed on the Oder. It went on and on. The floodplains of the Oder appeared lush green when flooded, sometimes with old trees and





sometimes with tall shrubs or reeds. The bird paradise seemed never-ending. Kingfishers flashed blue-green but they were so frantic that it was almost impossible to photograph them. We didn't see any more grey heron but we did see an osprey which flew overhead but apparently wasn't hungry. At least, it didn't appear to be hunting. The cruise along the Rostoka Odrzńska was uneventful but we stuck to the marked shipping channel for safety's sake. Level with Trzebiez, the riverbank retreated further and the great Haff showed us its most beautiful aspect. Because of the very good visibility, we were able to see the tall navigation signs (Brama Torowa 4 - 1) from a distance.

At wind force 4-5, we were also subjected to a heavy swell but this hardly had any effect on our 20-tonne Linszen. Our thoughts were directed towards the marina we should head for and we decided on Uekermünde, which we did not regret. We received a warm welcome at SSC Vorpommern. Dinner at "Backbord" was delicious, the prices reasonable and the atmosphere great. We were grateful for the always refreshing breeze as the heat continued unabated. When we wanted to start the air conditioning, the shore power had a relatively low rating (6 amps), which was insufficient for the air-conditioning unit. We briefly switched on the generator to cool down the yacht and then went to bed. The next morning, we decided to spend a quiet day in Uekermünde. We had not definitely planned our next destination. We had planned to call in at the marina at the entrance to the Peenestrom but made such good time that we decided to keep going. We continued north along the Peenestrom through the Moderort channel. Even our Linssen was now being tossed about in the wind, so we chose Rankwitz as our destination port. This was an excellent decision, as we can only recommend the charming harbour. Besides two

very good pubs, there is a fishmonger that sells fresh and smoked fish. Added to the beautiful port and the overall ambience, five pleasant holiday homes are situated right next to the port. It's a fine example of a successful port development. Our cruise continued, via Wolgast, into the Peenestrom. The entrance is somewhat industrial, which made us happy. There would be beautiful countryside again further north. The wind was now blowing at force 8 and all the locals were complaining that they had never before experienced so much wind so many days in a row. Kröslin was then our last port of call, a wonderful, very well kept marina opposite Peenemünde. Boat trips are run from here on a small passenger vessel. A day trip to Wolgast revealed a medium-size industrial town with the problems that sadly still persist in former East Germany, such as young people leaving.

In Kröslin, our travelling companions met acquaintances they had not seen for years, which resulted in a pleasant, convivial chat on board under the tarpaulin in gale-force wind (with gusts of around 7 on the Beaufort scale).

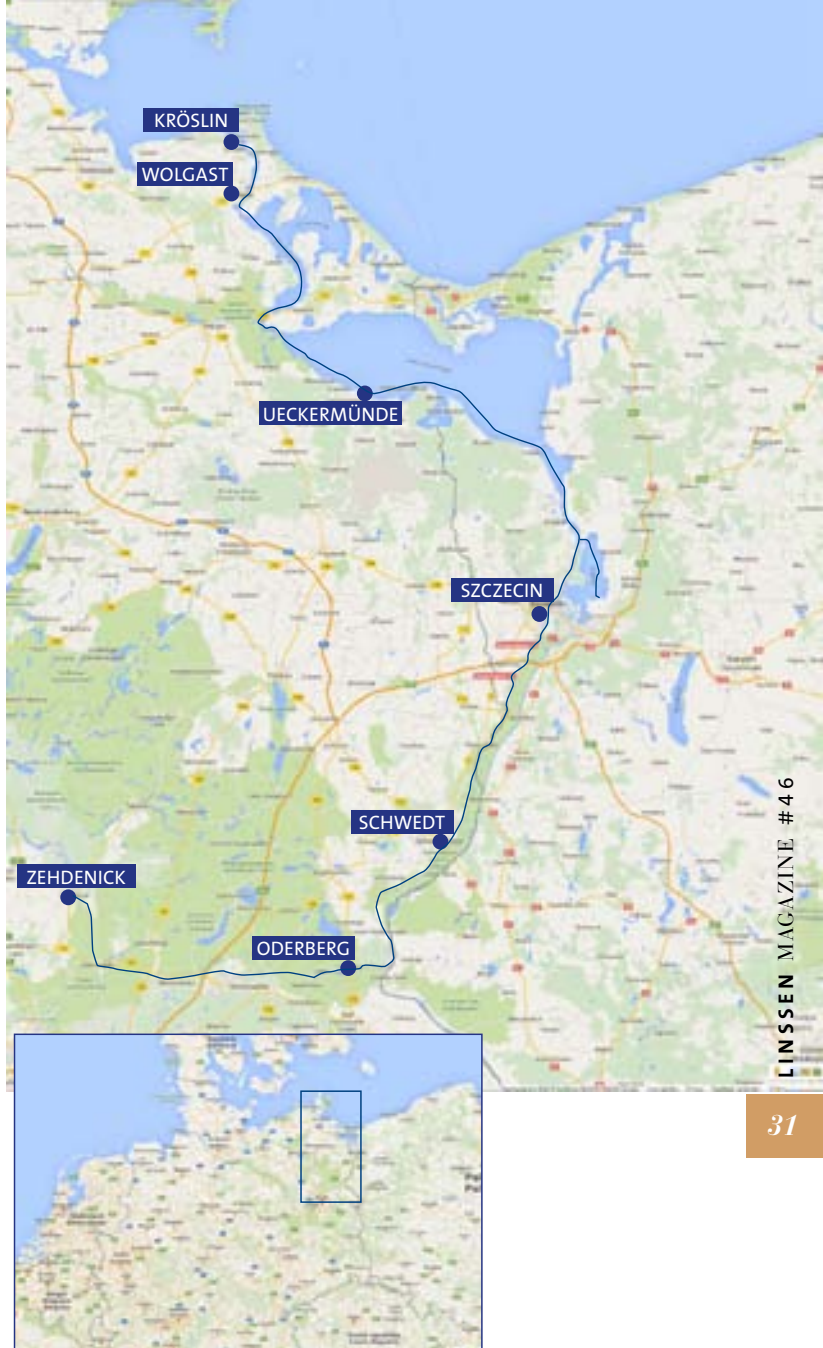
As the weather forecast was still issuing storm warnings, we had to abandon our actual destination of Greifswald and content ourselves with the fact that we had ventured into the Baltic.

We turned around.

We now headed south in bright sunshine but still facing heavy winds. As intended, we then turned, a little to the north of Szczecin, into Dabie Lake to experience an idyllic landscape. It is uniquely beautiful. We took our time and, towards evening, looked for a port that would do justice to this landscape. We found a dream spot in the HOM marina at the south-eastern extremity of Dabie Lake. One reason was a Pole who spoke very good German and helped us with the formalities, but during this time a beautifully restored motor yacht arrived and



moored behind us. The owner was Polish, based in this port and unbelievably proud (rightly) of the yacht he had restored. Our Polish hosts removed the benches from the rustic table standing on the jetty and replaced them with comfortable garden chairs to make things more pleasant, another extraordinary sign of hospitality. I would like to conclude the report with this port. The return trip to Zehdenick was uneventful. We arrived there four days later safe and sound and full of new impressions.



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HALFWAY AROUND EUROPE ON OUR OWN BRAND NEW YACHT!

Text and photographs: Randolph Nott

MANY WILL THINK WE ARE MAD. WHY REPLACE A THREE-YEAR-OLD GRAND STURDY 40.9 BY A BRAND NEW YACHT? HOWEVER, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DECKBRIDGE IN THE CLASSIC MODEL SERIES GAVE US THE IDEA OF TRADING IN OUR HIPPO FOR A HIPPO III!

We opted at the time for a Grand Sturdy in the Longtop version, because we were looking for a yacht with as few steps as possible – a sort of floating bungalow. What's more, we hardly ever used the roof – with the exception of the Variodeck roof. And that was precisely what persuaded us to choose this new yacht: the easily accessible 'upper deck' on the basis of the modern Grand Sturdy design, together with the smart use of space for storing the dinghy.

So that was the background to this first voyage, on which we would be bringing our new pride and joy to its homeport. Our HIPPO II was launched on 2 June 2016 along the Saône in Saint-Jean-de-Losne, France, and fitted out by H2O. All transport safety features had to be removed, the mast has to be erected and the dinghy had to be lifted on board using the boat's own mast crane. During these activities, the H2O staff were extremely supportive and friendly and we were offered a free berth in the boatyard's own marina. When you think back to 2016, two things probably stand out: the train strikes in France and the floods

along the Saône and the Rhône. Despite the strikes, we were fortunately able to reach our destination without any problems. However, we had to delay our departure because of high water levels. After all, we had to avoid having to negotiate too many floating tree-trunks and other trash. But in the end, we were able to cast off on 6 June and start our voyage! Even so, we still had to face several minor restrictions, because various berths where we wished to go sight-seeing were flooded and were therefore inaccessible. Not all locks were operating either, and in some cases



vessels were even led directly across weirs. Given that we were seafarers with limited experience on inland waterways, this promised to be an exciting voyage!

In the port of Chalon-sur-Saône, another skipper drew our attention to the Halte Nautique Confluence, a special marina in Lyon that was not included in our French inland waterways guide. (Although this guide is not always accurate and even refers to marinas that have been closed for years, it nevertheless remains a useful and almost indispensable guide.) On Friday 10 June, we cast off around 10.50 a.m. and reached the confluence of the Saône and the Rhône after 1.5 kilometres. Here, too, the high water had not yet disappeared completely and particularly near the many locks a large amount of driftwood had collected that had been carried along by the flow. This meant that despite our careful manoeuvring, the coolant filters had to be cleaned every day.

Although we had been impressed by the Sablons lock with a drop of 14.5 m, that was nothing compared with the Bollène lock with a drop of 22 m! We have to admit that before the voyage, the large number of locks unsettled us. But in the end, we were relieved to discover that the VHF contact and the passage through the locks themselves went smoothly, all the more because all locks on the Rhône are equipped with floating bollards. On several occasions, we were joined in the locks by a péniche and we were able to talk shop with the skipper while waiting. A péniche is a French barge, and they are often converted into houseboats. Thanks to their standard dimensions (38.5 m long and 5.05 m wide), these inland waterway vessels offer a great deal of space and some have splendid layouts. The skipper of 'our' péniche gave us a useful tip about a special marina in Avignon, which we otherwise would probably have missed. And that's how we ended up berthing along the river bank behind the famous bridge ('Sur le Pont d'Avignon'), alongside – strangely enough – another Linssen and with a view of a third Linssen!

Avignon is a real highlight for tourists and so we gave ourselves enough time to stroll through this splendid ancient city and to visit the Palais des Papes and other historic buildings. On Wednesday 15 June at 8.30 a.m., we embarked on the final stage of our voyage along the French inland waterways. At 10.15, we reached



The Bollène lock with a drop of 22 m

our final major river lock at Beaucaire. By now, passing through the locks, the thought of which had been unsettling before our voyage, had become second nature and they were no bother at all. At 2.15 p.m., we arrived at the Port Louis lock. As this lock, which is combined with a swing bridge, is operated only every few hours, we had to wait until 4.15 p.m., after which we sailed into the marina just before 5 p.m. In France, wearing life jackets in locks is compulsory, and this was a rule that we always obeyed – up until this final lock! The anticipation of finally being able to sail on the Mediterranean was so great that we totally forgot to put on our life jackets. This led to a sharp reprimand from the lock keeper via the loudspeaker system!

Berthing along the river bank behind the famous bridge at Avignon





The famous fortress in The Count of Monte Cristo, the novel by Alexandre Dumas

In the Golfe de Fos, we could finally take our place among the big boys. The sea lanes in the direction of Marseille are frequently used by seagoing vessels. Our destination that day was the Frioul archipelago. Here, we berthed in the marina that looks out on the fortress in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the novel by Alexander Dumas, with Marseille in the background. From there we took the ferry next day to Marseille. We were advised to do so because the Marseille marina was so busy – and it proved to be a good tip! Unfortunately, this voyage report offers insufficient space to describe all the highlights in this city. Just like in the other places we visited, we first took a sight-seeing bus to gain a general impression of the city, after which we explored on foot.

The next day we continued our journey, first to Bandol and from there to Cavalaire-sur-Mer. The distance from Bandol to Cavalaire-sur-Mer is 42.3 nautical miles (NM), or a relaxing day trip. We later increased our daily distances to 70 NM. It should not be forgotten that a Linssen is an easygoing and comfortable yacht and not a speedboat! A speedboat could cover 70 NM in less than three hours, provided that the weather is favourable and the sea is calm. Our HIPPO II may be slower, but it can also sail in conditions in which other boats prefer to remain in the harbour. In rough swell, the RotorSwing stabilizer, which we gifted ourselves when we acquired this boat, more than proved its worth.

Following Cavalaire, we continued our voyage along coastal towns such as Cannes, Nice, Monaco and San Remo. The calm sea and the splendid summer weather meant that we could enjoy our deckbridge to the full. We gave the fashionable resorts a miss and berthed in the marina of Loano. Here, we naturally replaced our French courtesy ensign with an Italian one. From Loano, we sailed right across the Gulf of Genoa to Lavagna, which was a distance of 48 NM. We occasionally came across seagoing vessels on

the way to Genoa, but far fewer than in the Golfe de Fos. It was now Friday 24 June and we wrote in our logbook: 9.10 a.m. cast off in Lavagna, heading: south-east / 76°. After 28 NM, the cliffs of La Spezia came into view, which meant that we had reached the Ligurian Sea. La Spezia is the capital of the Italian Province of Liguria (Riviera di Levante) and at the end of the Ligurian coast, the thermometer indicated a water temperature of 24°C! We continued to head for Porto di Pisa on the south side of the Arno estuary. The friendly woman at the marina pointed out that a trip of just 12 km along the Arno takes you to Pisa. And that's how we came to use our e-bikes for the first time, which until then has been conveniently stored in the 'cellar', in other words the storage space below the cockpit. The trip from the marina to the city was not particularly pleasant and we saw almost nothing of the River Arno. Pisa was crawling with tourists and evidently they thought it was extremely amusing – the Asian visitors in particular – to pose with outstretched arms against the tower, so they appeared to be supporting it on the photo. For us, this was a strange spectacle, but perhaps this didn't appeal to the North German sense of humour.

On Sunday 26 June, we continued along our familiar south-east heading. The wind had picked up and our weather app indicated a swell of 0.7 m, which was exactly what we were experiencing. This Apple/Android app called Windfinder is a real must! The information provided is very accurate. We had intended to visit the Sali marina (near Gagno), but we failed to take account of the fact that on Sunday afternoon at around 4.30 p.m., the day-trippers return with their boats to the marina, so that everyone is jostling for position. The strong wind and the shallow water at the marina entrance meant that waiting any longer



was risky, so we decided to continue our voyage to Punta Ala. It was almost 7 p.m. when we arrived at this marina, and with a charge of EUR 150 this was the most expensive overnight stay of our entire voyage! Whether the marina staff were aware that we no longer had any real alternative is a moot point ...

The next day, around the Argentario peninsula, we experienced heavy seas and high swell again, but fortunately we soon reached the Cala Galera marina. Our next stop was the marina of Riva di Traiano and the next day we sailed along the Tiber estuary. The shipping traffic here was considerable. In the evening, we berthed at the Marina del Nettuno and the next day – it was now 1 July – we moored at the Torre del Greco marina near Naples. Weeks later, an Italian from Salerno told us that this was one of the most dangerous places in Italy to berth at and that you should avoid wanting to stay the night there. We stayed until 4 July and had a great time. We toasted the victory of the German over the Italian football team with our Italian neighbours on the same jetty. Torre del Greco seemed to us to be a favourable location because there were easy train connections to Pompeii and Naples. Unfortunately, we did not climb Vesuvius, but we did have a good view of it every day from our yacht! You could write an extensive travel report just on Pompeii and Naples, because there is so much to see! We also visited Paestum and Herculaneum, which just like Pompeii was swamped during the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79.

The next stage of our voyage took us to Marina di Camerota, which was a distance of 74.1 NM (NB the daily distances were increasing greatly!), and the following day we headed for Cetraro in Calabria. Our stop in the Tropea marina was also the point from where

View of Vesuvius



we would enter the Strait of Messina.

This strait is generally considered to be very treacherous and was an important obstacle for General Montgomery during the allied invasion of Sicily in World War II. However, the weather forecast for us was very good. We could sit back and enjoy this voyage while watching the swordfish catchers at work. This type of fishing only occurs in the Strait of Messina. The ship's captain stands high up in the crow's nest and ensures that the boat is positioned favourably for the harpoonist, who is on a long bowsprit. You occasionally read about collisions with these fishermen, but that is probably attributable to the carelessness of the pleasure boaters. In other words, if you stay within the navigation channel and keep your eyes open, nothing can happen!

In the Strait of Messina, we berthed in the Reggio di Calabria marina. This was by far the worst marina of the entire voyage! The old port was overcrowded and we were urged by VHF to sail on to the new 'marina'. This is located in an industrial port and consists of just a few floating jetties. This was hardly a place to relax because ferries were mooring and casting off every hour, which caused not only choppy waters but also a lot of noise. It is only calm for a few hours at night. That was reason enough for us to cast off at 6.40 a.m. and to head for Capo Pellaro. After 7.4 NM, we left the Strait of Messina and 17.1 NM later (exact position: 37° 54.447 N, 015° 45.617 E) we headed east (90°). After another 31.5 NM near Galati we turned north east (40°) towards Porto delle Grazie, a marina with excellent service. We enjoyed ourselves so much here that we decided to rest for a day before heading out to sea again on Sunday 10 July. However, at 2 p.m. our relaxation was interrupted by a hefty commotion. A DSC alarm indicated that a vessel was in difficulties at position 35° 50 N, 014° 30 E. Given

our position, however, we were too far away to offer assistance. At 4.55 p.m., we reached the old port of Crotone, from where the next day we crossed the Gulf of Taranto to Santa Maria di Leuca. This was 72 NM across open waters, so that no land could be seen for most of the day! On this crossing we decided to push our HIPPO to the limit and open the throttle right up. At 2,800 RPM we reached a speed of 8.5 knots and at 1,950 RPM the speed dropped to 6.5 knots.

At 12.30 p.m., there was another DSC alarm, but no position was given. Whether these alarms were related to refugee boats is a matter of speculation. At 3 p.m. we sighted land and after 72 NM miles we berthed in Leuca at 6.28 p.m. Up until this point, we had sailed a total of 1,313 NM, for which 212 engine hours were required.

Our voyage continued to Porto Turistico in San Foca, which meant we had reached the Adriatic. An unpleasant Tramontana wind made mooring here something of a challenge! When preparing for this voyage, we were daunted by the idea of sailing on the Mediterranean, but we have now come to the conclusion that the Adriatic (on which we have been sailing for more than 30 years) can be far more unpleasant! The next day, we sailed past Brindisi and Monopoli to Marina Cala Ponte, a very well-kept but rather isolated new marina. Here, we hired a car to go and see the famous trulli dry stone huts in Alberobello.

Their very thick walls of solid natural stone with miniscule windows ensure that these trulli offer optimal protection from the sustained summer heat in Apulia. In the winter, the trulli retain the heat produced by the fireplace. Until the middle of the previous century, these pauper huts had been more or less forgotten, but since then they have been experiencing a true renaissance. Several are now rented out as holiday homes. Alberobello calls itself the 'trulli capital of the world' and has been a UNESCO world heritage site since 1996.

Because of a pressing appointment in Liverpool, we had to postpone the rest of our voyage until 23 July. On return, we sailed to Bari where we berthed at Nautica Ranieri. An engine service was now overdue. The total service offered by Mr Ranieri was exceedingly good and the port of Bari turned out to be very busy with a great many ferries. In contrast to Reggio

di Calabria, we had little bother from the ferries while moored at Nautica Ranieri. We got out our bikes once more and cycled to the historic centre of Bari.

On Thursday 28 July, we sailed on to Vieste, our final stop on the Italian coast. The next morning we headed for the Croatian island of Korčula. This meant that we had to cross the Adriatic, and given the high portside swell, we again appreciated the value of our RotorSwing stabilizers. Although the crossing was shorter than the distance we covered the day before, it still involved a voyage of 72 NM! In the late afternoon, we adjusted our heading and made for the island of Lastovo. Unfortunately, the bay offered no opportunity to drop anchor, but we read on Internet that another skipper had been able to berth directly at the customs jetty without any problems. With a 10-knot wind blowing, we reached the jetty at 8:05 p.m. – and were ordered by the police to leave again less than 30 minutes later! We somehow managed to convince the officers that it was too late for a new berthing manoeuvre and that we would clear customs the next day. We were told that in principle the customs worked 24/7, which was evidently not the case here, given that the office was in darkness and the site was completely vacated! The police then pointed out that we were next to the moorings for the ferry, which would result in very choppy waters. How we succeeded in not only staying there but also persuading the officers to help us tie up the boat with extra lines and fenders, was subsequently not entirely clear to us. The fact is

Alberobello with the famous trulli dry stone huts



that less than an hour later, we were startled by loud banging and shouting. It was the customs officer, who had apparently been questioned by the police concerning his whereabouts, and was therefore venting his anger on these stupid tourists with their yacht. We had to use all our charm and powers of persuasion to be able to remain at the jetty after clearing customs until the next morning. This culminated in the customs officer gradually becoming more friendly, completing the crew list himself and eventually even leaving the gate of his well-protected site unlocked, so that we could leave the site on foot the next morning to report to the harbour master.

We had now reached 'our' side of the Adriatic and we could now sail eastwards to the final destination of our voyage, Marina Veruda at Pula in Istria. We had reserved two extra weeks for this part of the journey. However, we concluded that in the summer months, you can better leave the Croatian coast to the Italians, as they tend to throw an Italian-style party for a few weeks. In the same way as these friendly southerners turn into chaotic road hogs when driving, they also become a menace on the water! They are all likeable

types, but they tend to arrange things differently and the rules of sailing apparently don't apply to them. As the old saying goes: laws are made in Rome and obeyed in Berlin!





TRAVELS IN THE NETHERLANDS WITH BOAT AND CAMERA

Text and photographs: Christine & Siegfried Günther

OUR 2017 BOATING SEASON WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO TRIPS: FIRST TO FRIESLAND IN MAY AND JUNE, AND THEN TO THE WESTERN PROVINCES OF THE NETHERLANDS FROM EARLY AUGUST TO MID-OCTOBER. WE HAD SET OUT FROM MAASBRACHT TO THE VECHT ONCE BEFORE IN 2015. IT WAS THIS FIRST EXPERIENCE THAT PERSUADED US TO EXPLORE THE NETHERLANDS IN GREATER DEPTH.

Having sailed the Meuse, the Moselle and the Saar on our Linssen yacht "VAGABOND" in 2016, last year we checked out the Netherlands as a cruising area.

Friesland was to be our first destination. We had already heard and read a lot about it and now wanted to experience it for ourselves.

It certainly wouldn't be our last "Netherlands experience".

TO DOKKUM AND BACK. ON THE MEUSE HEADING FOR THE WAAL

On Thursday, 4 May, we set out from Maasbracht, our "home port" of Van der Laan, on our touring season.

We took our time on the Meuse stage, with the idea of entering the Maas-Waal Canal in three days, i.e. following the route Maasbracht > Venlo > lake Leukermeer > Linden.

It was our first time in Linden, where a major new water sport area has been created, offering a wide variety of leisure activities, such as sailing, speed-boating, water touring, etc.

We spent the night in the WV Kraaijenbergse Plassen

marina, where we moored at the long "registration jetty".

FROM THE MEUSE TO THE IJSSEL

We left the Kraaijenbergse Plassen marina at 8:30 in dull weather, after laying out the life jackets to ensure our safety and talking through the codes of conduct for dealing with emergencies once again.

It was not raining when we set off, the wind was moderate at force 3 on the Beaufort scale and it was still very fresh.

Even though cargo vessels sail round the clock seven days a week, we chose the Sunday, in the hope that there would be less traffic on the Rhine.

The first stretch was from the Meuse as far as the Maas-Waal Canal, where things were unexpectedly quiet. We hoped our plan would work, as some 600 barges cross the Dutch-German border every day.

After travelling for two hours, we reached the lock for the river Waal (Rhine) near Nijmegen. When we sailed out of the lock, only one hundred metres separated us

from the Waal. On the right-hand side we could see the Nijmegen traffic control centre at the junction. We called in on VHF 4: "Vagabond coming from Meuse, downstream on Waal heading for IJssel". The traffic control centre advised us to wait for the barge travelling upstream. The barges travelling downstream were about 2 km away but were approaching fast.

As soon as the traffic allowed, we sailed on the right-hand side of the river, where a special channel for recreational craft is marked out by buoys.

We stayed on the right-hand side of the river at first as the current was weaker on the inside bend. The 18 km stretch between Nijmegen and the entrance to the Gelderse IJssel has a lot of bends in it and the current at Nijmegen was quite strong. During our trip, it reached 8 km/h under the bridges, where the strong current and busy traffic agitated the water considerably.

We changed sides at the next bend after about 6 km, where the channel for recreational craft was marked out by green buoys. The current and the traffic eased somewhat and we progressed at about 5 km/h. Despite the heavy traffic on the Waal, there are also times when you can enjoy nature.

After three hours of non-stop sailing, we turned into the Pannerden Canal, having informed the traffic control centre of our intention. We immediately picked up speed and headed for the IJssel at 16 m/h as far as Giesbeek marina, which we reached at about 3.30 p.m. after a varied and interesting journey.

ON THE IJSSEL HEADING FOR ZWOLLE

This stage was to take us from Giesbeek to Zwolle. We remained for two days in Giesbeek marina after

the Waal stretch. The Rhederlaag recreation area contains several generously proportioned full-service marinas. We opted for "MV Giesbeek", which also had a restaurant. We took the opportunity to refuel there. From the marina, the town of Doesburg is an easy 30-minute bike ride. Because of the sunny weather, we were able to enjoy the ride, despite the wind. It was also worth the trip. We took the opportunity to seek out the marina for passing traffic as well. It was still quite empty. Three boats were moored there that day.

The stretch on the IJssel took us through a delightful landscape. However, you always have to keep your wits about you on this river, with its many bends and very heavy traffic. AIS enabled us to detect approaching vessels at an early stage. In certain situations, we were approached directly by professional skippers who told us how to avoid dangerous conditions.

After 30 km and two and a half hours of travelling time, we approached the town of Zutphen and its port in the Vispoortgracht right in the town centre.

As we knew from our reading and from friends, care is required when entering the port. We had therefore been warned in advanced and first sailed past the port entrance and turned our boat downstream and then entered the port upstream, against the current. The entrance reminded us of the port of Neumagen Dhron on the Moselle.

It is also advisable to wait until the water in the river has calmed down after a ship has sailed past.

There, we were immediately offered a mooring for boats over 10 m. The north side of the port was nice and quiet but was in the shade in the mornings and evenings, which was regrettable given the temperatures at the time.

The port had a very pleasant ambiance. The harbour





master was on hand all day from 9.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. He told us that as many as forty passing boats a day were moored there in the summer. We wondered how tightly packed the boats would have to be in order to fit. A new port is currently being built downstream.

It's worthwhile taking a stroll round the well-preserved Hanseatic town. We also stayed there for two days.

Our resumed journey took us past Deventer to the port of Veessen.

When we arrived, we found out that the port was being extended and was not accessible. We therefore decided to go as far as Hattem near Zwolle, where we arrived after four and a half hours.

As soon as we tied up in the IJsseldelta Marina, we were impressed by this beautiful and well maintained place. The city of Zwolle can be reached in ten minutes by a direct bus route (number 203). A bus leaves the marina every 30 minutes (Hattem Centrum stop). The town can be reached by bicycle by taking a nearby ferry.

Friends advised us to avoid the marina for passing boats in Zwolle. It's probably a matter of taste. It's certainly safer and more peaceful to moor outside a big city. When sightseeing in Zwolle we also came across the marina, which made a good impression on us.

This time, the bus was our preferred option for going into town. Zwolle is a major shopping city. Despite being situated in a beautiful location and retaining many old buildings, it lacks the charm of Hattem or Zutphen.

We ended this stage with a "historical" walking tour through the centre of Hattem.

FROM THE OVERIJSEL TO FRIESLAND

We completed the stage in six stages but it can, of course, also be done faster. We permitted ourselves a

small detour via Meppel. The total distance from the Overijssel to Friesland is about 120 km.

In particular:

Hattem > Zwartsluis: 2.6 hours

Zwartsluis > Meppel: 1.3 hours (there and back)

Zwartsluis > Vollenhove: 2.9 hours

Vollenhove > Steenwijk: 3.9 hours

Steenwijk > Echtenerbrug: 4.5 hours

Echtenerbrug > Sneek: 4.1 hours

The towns on the route are not particularly noteworthy apart from Blokzijl. Meppel and Sneek are also worth a visit.

The marinas are all well equipped. Between Zwartsluis and Vollenhove, you cross lake Zwarte Meer, where you can enjoy nature to the full. You should therefore keep your binoculars handy. From there, we proceeded to Beulakerwijde. None of these lakes is very deep, but if you keep to the buoyed fairways you won't have any problems with water depth.

"Water tourism" is booming from Echtenerbrug onwards, where water sports are the only activity. Despite all this, agriculture is still important and the surrounding countryside remains intact.

From Echtenerbrug we first travelled to lake Tjeukemeer, heading towards Sloten. From there we continued to Sneek via Woudsend. In the municipalities, we were required to pay a toll of about €2 to cover the operation of the bridges. Sometimes it's even more expensive, when several bridges are operated by a single bridge keeper.



TRAVELLING IN FRIESLAND

The boat was not our sole means of transport in Friesland either, where we also travelled by train, bus and bicycle. In this way, we made a detour to Lemmer, Lauwersoog and Bolsward.

By boat we completed a round trip of 270 km from Sneek to Stavoren in seven stages.

Sneek > by bus to Lemmer

> Grou: 4.2 hours

> Dokkum: 5.2 hours > by bus to Lauwersoog

> Leeuwarden: 3.6 hours

> Grou: 5.3 hours

> Lemmer: 4.2 hours

> Akkrum: 4.5 hours

> Sneek: 3.1 hours

> Stavoren: 3.7 hours > by train and bus to Bolsward

The journey took us through canals, rivers and lakes. What is striking is the harmonious coexistence between nature and industry, between town and country, between humans and nature and between amateur and professional skippers.

Although we were not yet in the high season, the number of boats was astonishing. What must it be like there in high summer! The available range of moorings gave us some idea... In leisure strongholds like Grou, it can get crowded at any time of year. Sailing boats take over the lakes, especially at weekends.

We should emphasise that the facilities are generally both in very good condition and well equipped. Even the simple moorings in open countryside (known as "Marrekrite") are cared for and well maintained.

After two weeks in Friesland, our impression of the landscape was ambivalent: on the one hand, everything was very harmonious, well kept and peaceful while on the other hand, we felt it was a little lacking in variety. To put it another way, the landscape is a little monotonous. However, if what you are looking for



is a cruising area, this is the right place for you. But what we particularly liked about Friesland were the small towns, such as Dokkum and Akkrum. Lemmer, Sneek and Grou are real "tourist hot spots" and immediately put us in a holiday mood. Leeuwarden, Friesland's capital, impressed us with its beautiful moorings right next to the park. Our tour of Friesland ended in Stavoren, the launch pad for our crossing of lake IJsselmeer.

ON LAKE IJSSELMEER

After our experience on lake Tjeukemeer (strong wind resulting in very choppy water/force 5-6 on the Beaufort scale) we waited in Stavoren for two days, until lake IJsselmeer calmed down.

The weather service promised an improvement for the next two or three days. We therefore decided to moor our boat in the "Buitenhaven" (Outer Harbour) so that we could make an early start the next morning. We entered the sea lock at about 1.00 p.m. with another motor yacht, which was starting the crossing. Following a quick discussion with the other crew, we decided to change our plan at short notice and follow them... First, we remained inside the buoyed fairway. As soon as we left it, we set course in a southerly direction (180°).

The wind was blowing from the north at force 2-3 on the Beaufort scale, i.e. the best conditions for our "virgin" crossing.

We arrived in Enkhuizen after almost three hours. You get a wonderful view of the town from the water. When strolling through Enkhuizen, it's easy to imagine the former wealth of these trading towns. We liked the town a lot. It's worthwhile at least taking a walk round it. We strolled through the narrow streets for a second time the following morning, before setting off for Hoorn.

However, we first had to enter lake Markermeer through the "Naviduct" (a dual lock for leisure craft). Our journey to Hoorn then took us past the coast, first



towards the lighthouse, then to leisure craft buoy FL5 and then we set a direct course for the port (296°).

This also has an impressive entrance.

We tied up in the old town port, "the place to be".

Hoorn or Enkhuizen? Which is the more beautiful town? We liked them both very much, each in its own way.

The next morning we set off for Edam. Visibility had deteriorated. We selected the direct route, a straight line (175°), which quickly turned out to be a mistake.

This part of lake IJsselmeer contains a very large amount of seaweed, which soon fouled the propeller. The speed dropped considerably on several occasions and we tried to free it by moving forward and back.

This met with only partial success. We managed to reach the small canal in Edam and tied up in front of the sea lock on the quay.

A propeller inspection was now on the programme despite poor underwater visibility. It proved to be necessary. It took several dives to get the propeller and shaft clean again.

After this experience, we decided to continue our journey to Amsterdam via the canals. When we set off the next day, our attempt came to an end after the first lock. The bridge keeper informed us that a railway bridge would not be opened all weekend to allow for construction work. In pouring rain and because of the storm warning for the next few days, we decided to set off directly for Muiden in order to get out of lake IJsselmeer.

The conditions were right despite the variable weather. We sailed far from the shore in order to avoid the seaweed. Next, we reached the island of Marken as we headed south. We sailed past the harbours of Volendam and Monnickendam, very busy tourist attractions which we had briefly visited by bike. We set course for the buoyed fairways and, after almost four hours, arrived in the "Royal Marina". After registration, the harbour master hoisted the French flag.

Stavoren > Enkhuizen: 2.8 hours/22 km

Enkhuizen > Hoorn: 2.6 hours/24 km

Hoorn > Edam: 1.9 hours/15 km

Edam > Muiden: 3.7 hours/29 km

SPECTACLE ON THE VECHT

We set off from Muiden on the Vecht towards Maarssen, where we turned into the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal. We made a stopover in Loenen, where we were treated to a special spectacle on Pentecost Sunday.

Like the eye of a needle, the lock and bridge formed a bottleneck that had to be overcome in order to sail back to the Loosdrechtse Plassen or from there to the Vecht.

The lock was jam-packed all day and then we had to pay... Many eager spectators installed themselves comfortably alongside the lock to enjoy the show.

FROM THE VECHT TO THE HOLLANDS DIEP

After the days we spent on lake IJsselmeer, we left ourselves enough time to get from the Vecht to the Hollands Diep. The weather remained unsettled and the forecast storm came to pass.

We waited two days at the renovated jetty for passing boats in Breukelen until the situation improved and we could resume our journey without risk.

We were on the Vecht for the second time (see 2015).

Muiden > Loenen: 3.6 hours/23 km

Loenen > Breukelen > Maarssen: 1 hour/8 km

Maarssen > Schoonhoven: 5.1 hours/36 km (current on the Lek 1 - 2 km/h)

Schoonhoven > Streefkerk: 1.1 hours/8 km

Streefkerk > Dordrecht: 2.2 hours/19 km (current on the Lek: + 2 km/h; North: - 3 km; Oude Maas: - 3 km/h)

Dordrecht > Strijensas: 1.8 hours/15 km

We really liked sailing on the Lek despite the heavy rain. It was our first trip on this river.

The river was very wide at this point. There was not so much freight traffic as on the Rhine and the current was moderate.

However, caution is required when turning north towards Dordrecht as this is a crossing point for cargo vessels, ferries and pusher craft on their way to and from Rotterdam.

We tied up in the "New Haven" marina in Dordrecht in summery temperatures. You can only enter for ten minutes every half hour. We arrived at just the right time, 10.30 a.m. After we reported in on VHF Channel 74, the bridge was opened to let us in.



We took advantage of the fine weather to take an extensive tour of the city past the many harbours and the banks of the Oude Maas and Merwede, via the weekly market. The right time and place to buy soured herring...

The following day, our journey took us from Dordrecht to the marina in Strijensas, where we stayed for two days and took advantage of the surrounding area. There, on the north bank of the Hollands Diep river you can find the purest nature and, on the south bank, the major Dutch refineries.

IN THE BIESBOSCH NATIONAL PARK

We left the Bergse Maas near Drimmelen and turned into the Biesbosch. After proceeding for 1 km, we found a mooring for about eight boats. This access to land gave us the opportunity to take a long walk through the unspoilt, almost jungle-like countryside. We made sure to mark our route... The evening ambiance was wonderful, with us sitting on our aft deck enjoying Mother Nature. The following morning we set off in the direction of Heusden. From there we were back in familiar surroundings on the Meuse, which we are getting to like more and more.

Six weeks later, we were moored up at the Van der Laan Yachting Marina in Maasbracht again after completing 1,014 km in 138 hours without a hitch. The journey taught us more about the Netherlands and we learned to appreciate the country more. Once again,

the trip involved many new "experiences" (!) in terms of landscape, technical aspects, culture and more. Where, to us, France is the land of locks and landscapes, we can safely say that the Netherlands is the land of bridges and towns.

Maybe another useful tip: you should definitely visit Friesland in the low season. Since swapping our VW bus for a "New Classic Sturdy 36 AC" five years ago, we have been exploring Europe from the water, giving us a whole new perspective. The boat trips provide us with opportunities to make many valuable contacts and, not least, to take great photographs.

You will also find additional and up-to-date information here: <http://vagabond4you.com>





ELFIN COVE 2017

FROSTY DREAM TRIP ACROSS SWEDEN

Text and photos: Hildegard Frank and Udo Ehmsen

10 May 2017 – we were really excited as we flew to Maasbracht, where a freshly cleaned Linssen 45.9 was awaiting its new owner with a welcome drink. Our ultimate destination, one that Udo had long dreamt of and longed for, was the Swedish archipelago.

First we had to tidy up and rearrange things, however – it's almost unbelievable the amount of stuff from our last boat, a 40.9, we had to stow away – plus loads of solid food and 150 bottles of Austrian wine. After all, we didn't want to go thirsty in the parched North! But after three days everything was in its place, the systems had been tested, the river trial had been completed and, after enjoying an exquisite dinner at Restaurant Da Vinci as our reward, we finally departed on 13 May.

First stop: t Leuken with its wonderful evening atmosphere, then on to Nijmegen, where Fortune smiled on us by providing a centrally located and indeed perfect mooring, which was also free of charge due to conversion work. It's a nice town, where an enchanting food market was being held that day. After a good portion of spare ribs, we even sipped a delicious Scropino (a lemon vodka sorbet) and enjoyed the perfect evening after a sunny day. The weather remained calm, the Wesel-Datteln Canal was extremely friendly and the day ended at a peace-

ful leafy mooring in front of the Hünxe lock. The only cloud on the horizon was when the generator displayed an oil pressure warning and promptly went on strike. So we phoned for help and made an appointment with a technician the next day in Münster.

We passed through the next few locks as if we had trained for it, but we were still happy to then find a lock-free route through the Dortmund-Ems Canal. The repair of our generator (a capacitor burst!!) allowed us to spend a whole day in Münster. The city harbour is surrounded by bars and restaurants and full of cheerful people, and the city itself is appealing and well worth a visit. Although we weren't exactly "legally" moored there, the kind officers of the water police quickly realised that we were simply unable to move away because of a technical problem and we eventually left the marina with a police security badge.

Everything went very smoothly for the next two days. It kept raining on and off and we quickly sailed to Wolfsburg via Hannover. It then became really

exhausting. Although we had cast off from our mooring at the Elbe bridge by 7:30 am, we were held up for quite a long time at the Hohenwarth Lock (18.5 m rise!). And we wanted to reach Potsdam the same day! It got dark and it was quite a challenge to orientate ourselves and navigate to the marina "Am Tiefen See", but by 10.30 pm we were "Roman Catholic" (Austrian expression for mooring bow before stern) at a jetty behind a bridge.

On 23 May we met a friend from Berlin who was a knowledgeable and willing guide through the parks around Sanssouci Palace - it was sunny and quite hot and we were in good spirits, not least because the day ended with an excellent meal in a delightful Italian restaurant.

In Berlin we brought Udo's son and daughter-in-law, Lutz and Tanja, on board - they are experienced sailors and were a valuable addition to the crew - and sailed to the Niederfinow boat lift, which we passed through the next day - very impressed by the engineering of the giant structure. We did 50 miles a day to Gartz and another 43 miles a day took us to Schwinemünde, where the adventure actually began. We had intended to take another long walk, but a heavy downpour dampened our enthusiasm for walking and we ended up at the harbour pub, where we ate hearty but good-quality food. We then went to bed at a respectable

hour because we were starting very early the next day, with 76 miles to cover. Destination: Bornholm. Although we knew the Windfinder reports and all the other forecasts by heart, we did have to try very hard to make sense of the metres per second. We considered the options. So we decided, let's go.

We cast off at 4:45 am on a calm lake with the sun rising. Great. We could still observe the sunrise for a little longer, but that was it for a pleasant crossing: dense clouds, weather turning cool, water at 14.5°C, poor visibility and a highly disagreeable wave coming right at us from the side.

Not every stomach could cope with the rolling of the boat and we also noted that the stowage in the ship was still clearly in need of improvement for a sea journey, though we had thought that everything was secure - chaos reigned. Even the handsome armchair next to the helmsman's seat sped smoothly through the area, with Hilde sitting on it, despite an almost Gordian tangle of knots. (This situation has now been remedied. We are now the proud owners of a second helmsman's seat and the lady skipper is not only more safely seated but can also see out without standing up!) We navigated perfectly, even though the "Auto-Joschi" (the GPS automatic control system) behaved very unconventionally due to the side wave and occasionally started a rapid 360 degree turn - a rather

Gothenburg's opera house



St. Anna archipelago



Slottsholmen



Söderköping



unpleasant manoeuvre on this wave. Shipping routes were nicely crossed. After about 11 hours, everything suggested that Bornholm was only 2 miles away. The only thing was - we couldn't see it. We were beginning to have our doubts when, thankfully, the coast appeared in front of us before a collision occurred. The very pretty Norrekas marina was also quickly found, where we actually observed some Vikings walking (not swimming!) into the water, which was by now a full 13°C! Our dear guests then cooked a delicious goulash and we fell into bed early and dead tired. After all our exertions, we deserved a day off. We took an extraordinarily beautiful bus trip to the ruined castle of Hammershus, where we very steadfastly braved a violent storm and watched Danish children playing a kind of game of knights. We then undertook another charming short walk to Allinge, where we had a delicious meal.

Weather conditions turned one day off into three, but Rønne is a charming little town and in its streets, shielded from the wind, you can also spend time in the sun and have a good time, which we certainly did.

Sweden. The Promised Land

We had 2 June in mind for an orderly continuation of the journey and so we set off for the Promised Land, Sweden. We covered 30 miles that day and reached Simringshamn, where I had my first Swedish fish soup and it was delicious! Of course we wanted to get on our way quickly, with Karlskrona as our destination, but again highly unpleasant waves accompanied by high winds forced us to change our plans - we cut short our route and called in at the island of Hanö. We moored there safe and sound, but it could actually have been November rather than June. It was horrible, cold, rainy and grey as grey could be. But Lutz had

planned to have a barbecue, so that's what he did. It was a wet and chilly experience! Well, anyone can cook up a barbecue in summer!

After fitting in another day off for foul weather, we finally passed through the desired archipelago landscape, where we were soon grateful that we also had electronic nautical charts - navigation was really demanding. But these archipelagos were also incredibly attractive, and that day the weather played along. It was sunny at about force 4 on the Beaufort scale. In the afternoon we arrived at the Ekenäs Marina in Ronneby and found a wonderful, picturesque spot. Next to us were some Swedish motorboats on which the Swedish national holiday was being celebrated. The barbecued sausages next door smelt so wonderful that Tanja went on a shopping tour with the dinghy and the bicycle, while Udo and I went for a walk to explore the surrounding area. Consequently, we had barbecued sausages with rosemary potatoes and salad in the evening.

The next day we cheerfully left for Karlskrona in the morning but, regrettably, the starboard engine had no cooling water. What a relief it was that we had two engines, as the port engine on its own took us safely to our destination. We tested the engine again before calling a technician and to our great joy it was running again. We had probably got rid of the green stuff that had apparently clogged up the intake during the journey. And the impeller survived!

Lutz and Tanja had to return home on 9 June as duty was calling. So we spent two very pleasant days in Karlskrona, the visit to the shipping museum being especially charming, and enjoyed really delicious food at the marina's "Fish and Vinj" restaurant.

Trollhättan Canal



Sjötorp, Göta Canal



And then we were alone again. We set off for Öland: first we had a beautifully dreamlike, exciting and rather tortuous trip through the archipelago - which meant we had to watch out like a "Haftlmacher"! (it just means very attentively!)

We then crossed over to Öland and moored in Grönhögen, an absolutely enchanting, dreamy harbour. It was a beautiful place, if a bit chilly! Elfin Cove was now calling, for some maintenance first and a pile of washing had also built up in the meantime. But we also ventured out on a cycle tour to the beautiful bird sanctuary and nature reserve of Ottenby, pure nature, wonderful. However, the headwind also made cycling quite difficult.

We continued to Borgholm, and we again experienced strong winds, unfortunately also at the berth. We were even rocking violently back and forth. Actually, it should all have been going on in Borgholm, in the sunny part of Sweden, where the Swedish royal family also has their summer palace, Solliden. That's just a story, though. It was pretty dead. Most of the restaurants were closed (schools had been on holiday since

the day before, so it was theoretically high season), and the food we were served during our one visit to a restaurant was simply bad. However, we had very nice walks through the nature reserve to the palace and Borgholm castle, which was a ruin. We also increasingly experienced the "white nights" there - it didn't get properly dark any more. We covered our hatches in the aft cabin with cardboard under the curtains, otherwise it would have been simply too bright to sleep. Something highly unusual happened on the morning of 14 June: bright sunshine. You might almost believe that summer actually existed there. We opened the roof on the aft section. It was lovely. The way to Oskarshamn was still quite pleasant, but there was another heavy shower while we were refuelling and mooring. It's so Nordic.

And we continued in a northerly direction. After 42 miles with quite pleasant weather and wind only force 3 on the Beaufort scale (yes, really) from the south, it quite soon it got chilly again and once more started to rain. We anchored for the first time off Loftahammar and it was wonderful. We stayed one day, ignoring the rain, sipping Prosecco and eating well, and just lazed around.



Now we wanted to go to the St. Anna Archipelago, which had been described to us by locals as being particularly beautiful. In the morning it was foggy, but soon the sun was shining in the sky, the archipelago really was fantastic, just like in the brochure. Once again, navigating was a real challenge but all in all it was just how we dreamed it would be. Fyrudden, which we were actually aiming for, proved to be completely unsuitable for our big, beautiful Elfin Cove, so we sailed on, finally anchoring in the dream bay par excellence, in the Lusholm-Linders Fjords. It was picture-perfect!

It was so beautiful there that we wanted to stay longer, but for the weather....the wind was steadily rising, so we really wanted to get into a marina. We had changed our original travel plans. We would neither be heading for Stockholm, nor turning around and sailing back, we would be continuing our journey through the Göta Canal across Sweden to Gothenburg and then sailing back. So we headed for Mem, where the canal begins. There wasn't a suitable mooring place on our route and we had a force 6 gale with gusts up to 37 knots, so we headed straight for Mem, where a small miracle happened: it was suddenly calm, peaceful, fine and sunny and we were moored in fantastic surroundings. We could even - wonder of wonders - spend a long evening outdoors.

Sweden's Construction of the Millennium

The formalities were quickly completed. We received our "Pickerl" (=adhesive label), which constituted payment not only for the passage, but also for the use of all the locks and all 21 marinas.

The Göta Canal (190 km), together with the Trollhätte Canal, is 390 km long and contains 58 locks, 50 bridges, 2 trough bridges and 5 lakes, rising 91.5 metres. It's a truly impressive construction, crowned Sweden's Construction of the Millennium: from 1810 to 1832, a total of 58,000 people were involved in digging a stretch of almost 90 km by hand, with shovels and spades.

We received information material about the route, were instructed about the correct locks, downloaded the Göta Canal App, bought a long line - after which we got started with the first lock. On the journey through the romantic canal you are supposed to relax and take a break - and so after achieving the "considerable" daily target of 2.3 miles, we moored at another dream spot, in Söderköping. It was warm and the town was enchanting, with a long, empty jetty and a tapas bar next to it. This cheered our hearts: we climbed the local mountain, walked through the village, did a little shopping and finally ended up in a

nice restaurant where we could once again sit outside and eat fish soup.

We set off in the morning and 6 hours, 12 locks and 3 encounters with other boats and several bridges later (the timing of the opening of the bridges was usually excellent!), we landed up in Norsholm in front of Lake Roxen.

Norsholm actually had nothing to offer, and the weather was windy and chilly. So we cooked a nice meal and looked forward to the next day, when we would be crossing Lake Roxen. The landscape was simply wonderful, completely isolated, and it was very windy. We then ascended the Carl Johan Locks, a flight of locks rising 38.8 m, to the Berg Marina. And - we were completely alone. When we asked about this, we were told that only one single other boat had passed through that day. The generously proportioned Berg Marina provides space for 40 boats, but there were only seven of us in total.

The next day's stretch as far as Borensberg was another typical canal journey: the obligatory rain, quite a lot of locks, 8 bridges, a leisurely cruise through the countryside past horses, sheep and cows, with hardly a house in sight. Beautiful.

And the next day, after crossing Lake Boren, we were confronted with the next lock stairs which carried us through at quite a pace, which could even be described as rapid. That day was the summer solstice, one of the biggest festivals in Sweden. For once we were therefore hoping for a little life and maybe even some fun. The nice student at the lock recommended Motala, where she said there was a particularly fine celebration – so that's where we went! On the canal, we actually passed a meadow full of lively activity and festive atmosphere. However, the mooring in Motala was more suitable for toy boats, but we managed to find a reasonable mooring and looked forward to the evening. So off we went to downtown Motala. There was no sign of life. It was dead. No shops, no restau-

rants open, no people. But we had seen the lively celebration on the way in, so we simply walked there along the canal. However, we had underestimated the distance – it was quite a trek! And then, to our bitter disappointment, we found that everything was already over and the people had all gone. The last stall sold us a shrimp sandwich before locking up. It was a long walk back. The rain set in and then got heavier. It was cold. We made ourselves at home on the boat – what a blessing that we've got decadent underfloor heating! – and watched a couple of episodes of Downton Abbey. Happy Midsummer!

We were woken at 7.30 the next morning by an unplanned alarm from my mobile phone and it was a good thing too. Windfinder was predicting force 5 to 7 gales for the next two days, our mooring was neither comfortable nor safe and we were facing the prospect of crossing Lake Vättern, the second largest lake in Sweden, which can be quite treacherous and is likened to the open sea. So we left in a mad rush and were confronted with strong winds and high waves. Of course, the wind came at an angle of about 90° and had a water surface area of about 100 km to build up the waves, but we had by then mastered the art of stowing so our stuff wasn't flying about any more. We arrived rather shaken in a pretty little Gästhamn (harbour): Forsvik. Somehow, time had stood still there. I had been there 28 years before and completed the trip on the Juno, the oldest canal boat, which we met three times, and since then practically nothing had changed. Many of the photos I took at the time could have been taken now. In the evening we visited the much feared 3.5 m lock with uneven rock walls, which we would have to get through the following day, which, by the way, we actually mastered brilliantly and then found ourselves on Lake Viken, the highest point on the Göta Canal, at 91.8 m. Our mooring in Hajstorp was wonderful, in the countryside, isolated, only one boat apart from us. The facilities including toilets, showers, washing machine and kitchen were, like everywhere else, well equipped and spotlessly clean. We had a

Scandinavian nights



cleaning, washing and shopping day (the latter by bike) and a lazy dinner and evening in front of the TV. We watched the final episode of Downton Abbey!

June 27th was our last day on the Göta Canal and that day it showed us its sweet side: the weather was glorious and the landscape was picture-perfect, ... and there were a lot of locks! We stayed overnight in front of the last lock on the Göta Canal, in Sjötorp on Lake Vänern. First we had a light lunch with a glass of white wine and took a walk through the village and to the lake. Because we liked the restaurant so much we went there again in the evening and had a wonderful dinner of zander (also known as pike-perch) with asparagus and potatoes.

We then continued our journey, along the banks of Lake Vänern, heading south to Mariestad, where we took on another guest. Mariestad has a beautiful cathedral, in which there was a fascinating exhibition "Icons in Transition". There is also a very nice old town and a lot of shops and restaurants. In one of them, on the shore of the lake, we were entertained by an accordion orchestra, and we also had an excellent meal there.

Lake Vänern

On 1 July we crossed Sweden's largest lake, Lake Vänern. We had chosen an absolutely perfect day for the crossing. It was still a bit rough to start with, which triggered slight seasickness in our guest in the form of lethargy. Then the sun started shining, a light breeze got up, the roof was lowered and we downed a couple of glasses of Prosecco, enjoying every minute of the 53 miles we covered that day. In Vänersborg we tied up at moorings, very pleasantly situated at the edge of this very nice town - but there doesn't seem to be any nightlife in Sweden. During our walk after dinner the streets were actually deserted.

Trollhätte Canal

We set the alarm for 7 am the next day as we wanted to get to Lilla Edet and faced the prospect of several bridges and, above all, a demanding flight of locks on

the Trollhätte Canal. However, an extremely strong wind was still blowing and we first had to solve the problem of how to get out of the narrow moorings unscathed. We postponed our departure, did some more shopping, thought about it some more and finally, after some detailed consultation, plucked up the courage to leave. Pure stress! But we managed it and shipped out, mightily relieved. The locks were large and a bit heavy, but everything went OK.

However, our destination, Lilla Edet, which had been described as being very scenic, proved to be a bitter disappointment: it was tiny, we could hardly manoeuvre into it and there were no suitable mooring places, so we proceeded to the next waiting quay, moored, cooked a meal and had a nice time. And now we only had one more stage to go to reach Gothenburg. Lilla Bommen Harbour is located in the centre of this beautiful, bustling city in front of its modern, impressive opera house. However, several moorings reserved for boats of our size were damaged or not available but, after consulting with our neighbours, we managed to squeeze in and moored reasonably safely. It was a relief to finally experience a lively city with many fine restaurants, cafés, shops and - actually - people, and we enjoyed our afternoon and evening there.

The second part of our tour, via Marstrand, Helsingör, Copenhagen, Barther Bodden, Stralsund, Wolgast, Stettin, Berlin, Wolfsburg and back to our home port is a story in its own right. At any rate, our journey ended in Maasbracht after 2,021 nautical miles - a wonderful trip, even though we later learned from a Swede that it had been the coldest summer in Sweden for 158 years - yes, it was a poor choice! But the memory is mostly wonderful, with many dreamlike impressions, tempered by a good dash of sadness that this journey is over.



Hildegard Frank and Udo Ehmsen





Of pearls and hidden gems

A voyage on the Dalmatian Sea

Text and Photos: Randolph Nott

For this year's trip along the Croatian coast we started out from our mooring on the island of Krk or, more accurately, from Punat Marina. We also returned there after a few eventful weeks and 666 nautical miles.

Our Linssen Grand Sturdy 40.9 once again proved to be an extremely reliable boat – which is something of a life insurance policy, especially in unfavourable weather conditions! After almost 40 years of experience of the Adriatic weather, we are very well aware that the “bathtub” Adriatic can get quite rough. Although Linssens are not a very frequent occurrence hereabouts (but increasingly frequent now), they are unsurpassed in their class in terms of comfort, convenience and safety. But now to our trip, about which we'd like to give a partial report at this point. In 2018 we were planning to return to Dubrovnik after almost four decades to make a “trial trip” to Montenegro from there. Suffice it to say, we got to Dubrovnik but, for a variety of reasons, we postponed Montenegro for another day.

Dubrovnik, the pearl of the Adriatic, is admired year after year by thousands of tourists, who are disgorged there from large cruise ships and then try to take in the extremely interesting history of the city in a day. Does anyone really need to write anything more about Dubrovnik? That's certainly a fair question. In our report, the World Heritage city takes a back seat, sim-

ply because there are many other little known places of historical interest that can be regarded as hidden gems. But – let's start northwest of the famous city on the island of Mljet.

The island became part of the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century, and was settled by pirates in the Middle Ages. In the 12th century, Benedictine monks from the abbey of Pulsano (Puglia) were gifted a large part of the island. They built their monastery on the island of Sveta Marija (Saint Mary) in Veliko Jezero lake (picture 1).

Parts of the island are now a Croatian national park, which means that you have to pay an entry fee. However, the fee does include a short boat trip to the



monastery island. Although located on the island and without direct access to the sea, the emerald green waters of the lake are salty. The lake is connected to the sea underground and has its own ecosystem. This is another “pearl”, although less well known than Dubrovnik! We moored our “Hippo II” at the jetty belonging to the restaurant “Dalmatinac Ivo” in Tatinica bay (42° 47.239' N / 17° 24.064' E) (image 2). The restaurant is now run by Daniela Matana. The cost of the mooring is compensated by the food in this traditional restaurant or konoba (very tasty and quite inexpensive). We stayed for two nights, got our bikes out of the “cellar” (folding bikes we stowed underneath the cockpit) and cycled to Polače (42° 47.4' N / 17° 22.6' E) and Pomena (42° 46.8' N / 17° 19.9' E). Both places can also be reached directly by boat. Polače is situated by a well sheltered bay on the north coast of the island of Mljet. In Polače, a Roman palace was built in the 3rd century, which is still the dominant feature today and which was clearly much more than a “Villa Rustica”.

The fishing village of Pomena is located not far from the salt water lakes of Veliko Jezero and Malo Jezero, a rural idyll in the middle of the 53 km² national park.

According to official figures, the village has only 50 inhabitants. From there you get a good view of the Pelješac peninsula and the island of Korčula – a very attractive area for sailors. Pomena is well set up for tourists. There are small retail outlets, a few souvenir shops and the only hotel on Mljet. In addition, there are numerous restaurants and konobas – a very varied range of food on offer. So there’s more than just the above-mentioned Benedictine monastery to admire on the island of Sveta Marija!

After the stopover on Mljet the next destination on our journey was ACI Marina Dubrovnik (42° 40,201' N / 18° 07.546' E). The marina is situated at the end of the long Rijeka-Dubrovaca fjord, the beginning of which is dominated by an imposing bridge. We travelled into the city by bus, which runs every 15 minutes from a stop close to the marina. We don’t recommend cycling on this road under any circumstances! Croatia is simply not equipped for cyclists and cycling can sometimes be a dangerous undertaking. Costing the equivalent of €1.50, the bus is very inexpensive – which, by the way, you can’t say about the marina or anything else around Dubrovnik! Here are a few examples: A tour of the city wall will cost you 150 Kuna (kn)



– approx. €20. A scoop of ice cream costs between €2 and €2.30 in the Old Town and a postcard is 14 kn (€1.90), which costs 4 - 5 kn outside of the Old Town! So it's no wonder that the fee for berthing in the marina (off-season) is €105 for a 12.85 m vessel! If you book in advance (via Internet), you will have to pay an additional 20% booking fee for the first day. We made the mistake of emailing to ask whether a berth was free. This was deemed to be a "reservation" and we got hit with this 20%. At this point it should be mentioned that Croatia drastically increased* the tourism tax for boaters (up to 700%) in 2018. It remains to be seen whether this was a wise decision in the longer term or whether it will provide incentives to reconsider visiting. (* Update: Croatia has reduced the increase).

Bora weather

We want to say less about Dubrovnik itself in our report, since the history and sights of the city have already been described many times before. We were lucky to catch a day when the bora wind was blowing and learned that you can actually enjoy bora weather!



What tends to annoy us while on the water benefited us during the city tour, i.e. moderate temperatures and fewer visitors. The hordes of people who usually crowd the streets would have been even more unbearable otherwise! There were already more than enough (image 3).

From Dubrovnik we set course for Pelješac (Stonski Canal). The Pelješac peninsula is one of the best wine-growing areas in Croatia and it is not for nothing that Pelješac is nicknamed the "Peninsula of Wine". The landscape is characterised by original natural features of the Mediterranean, including karst rocks and valleys, olive and fig trees, beeches, pine trees, etc.

At this point, we'd like to make a quick digression concerning the records we made on board. For years, keeping the logbook was a somewhat tedious evening task of comparatively moderate accuracy. This year for the first time we used an application on the iPad, which – like an anchor alarm – is maintained by Florian Kriesche (info@logbook-app.com) and is available for a small charge. Originally developed for sail boats, this app has now been adapted for motor yachts. What is remarkable, by the way, is the level of support provided by the app developer for questions and suggestions. So now we have very accurate information on our trips. We freely admit we are definitely not "computer freaks", but relics from the "analogue era". Nevertheless, we quickly got used to the convenience of this way of recording, which provides two (or more) pages per day, so in addition to the automatic

This section of the trip is recorded in our electronic logbook as follows:

Datum Mittwoch, 27. Juni 2018
von 42° 40,201' N 018° 07,546' E
 Marina Dubrovnik; Küste Dalmatien;
nach 42° 48,203' N 017° 44,605' E
 1.7 sm NNW Bucht Prizina; Stonski Kanal;

Uhrzeit	Status	Wind		See-gang		Strom			Wetter			Kurs / Fahrt			Seemeilen			Position
		Richt.	kn	Richt.	kn	Richt.	kn	allg.	mbar	mm	KÜG	FÜG	Segel	Motor	Log			
12:07		046°	0	2	---	-	---	---	1007.3	0.10	---	0.0 km	.0	.0	.0	Marina Dubrovnik; Küste Dalmatien;		
12:08		046°	0	2	---	-	---	---	1007.4	0.10	---	0.0 km	.0	.0	.0	Marina Dubrovnik; Küste Dalmatien;		
12:23		046°	0	2	---	-	---	---	1007.3	0.10	258°	6.5 km	.0	1.3	1.4	Fischerhafen Mokosica; Küste Dalmatien; Adriatisches Meer		
13:30		290°	19	2	---	-	---	---	1007.0	0.10	297°	6.1 km	.0	8.2	8.2	0.5 sm westlich Leuchfeuer Trsteno; Insel Lopud;		
14:30		290°	15	2	---	-	---	---	1007.6	0.10	294°	5.9 km	.0	14.2	14.2	0.5 sm NE Misnjak; Insel Šipan;		
15:25		290°	9	1	---	-	---	---	1007.6	-	215°	0.0 km	.0	19.2	19.2	1.7 sm NNW Bucht Prizina; Stonski Kanal;		
Tagessumme														.0	19.2	19.2		
Vortrag														.0	206.2	206.4		
Gesamt														.0	225.4	225.6		



Der Betreiber des Restaurants fängt die in seiner Küche verarbeiteten Fische (und andere Meerestiere) selbst



Grabinschrift in der Kapelle



logs shown, there is also plenty of space for personal entries (including photos)! Back to our trip.

We had set our course for the Stonski Canal and moored in a small bay, which belongs to the village of Kobaš, at the jetty of a konoba, the "Tavern Ribarska Kuca Niko" (image RNO_1506.jpg), (42° 48.203' N / 17° 44.605' E). The restaurant itself is lovingly kitted out with historical artefacts relating to seafaring and the sea (image RNO_1472.jpg). This is a paradise for lovers of fish dishes! The proprietor of the restaurant himself catches the fish (and other seafood) prepared in his kitchen and so you can look forward to freshly caught local delicacies. His boat makes a rather audacious impression and we have captured it in the picture (4).

The bay is safe in all weathers, only a wind as strong as a bora can sometimes be unpleasant, although this should hardly have any effect at a proper jetty like



this one. We had already read in a travel guide that there is a 300-year-old oil mill there. On the Internet, 500 years was also mentioned, but this is implausible, since a grave inscription in the chapel refers to the year 1697 (picture 5). The oil mill is part of a baroque estate, which was built in the 17th century by a literary man from Dubrovnik, who had obviously become very wealthy. In those days, anyone who could afford it tried to escape the heat and stress of the city during the summer months. This included the Betondi family, who, in addition to the stone-built baroque mansion, also had a beautiful terraced garden with a sea view. The houses of the other villagers nestle against the mansion as if seeking protection. The summer villa also has some other historically significant features. The family crest consists of two crossed dolphins, which can be interpreted both to mean that this is a Christian family and as a reference to the Middle Ages. Wide steps lead to a relatively narrow, barrel-vaulted entrance, above which a machicolation (floor open-

ing in a projecting parapet through which objects can be dropped) threatens invaders. The only preserved window grille suggests oriental craftsmanship (picture 6). The Betondi family had no direct descendants and the property has changed hands several times. Today the whole things belongs to the family of the emeritus scientist Prof. Helga Milovčič, who moved there from Vienna in the 1960s through marriage. We were fortunate enough to meet the lady herself, now almost 80 years old, who made it possible for us to visit the mill, which at one time was operated solely by animal and human power, and the adjacent chapel.

We learned a lot about the history of the place that we didn't know before. The photograph (picture 7) shows the old mill and the ruins of the house. There is a particularly tragic story about this which Mrs Milovčič told us.

Her story took us back to 1943. German troops had been attacked by partisans in the local area. It had been revealed to the German occupiers that there would be a group of partisans in Kobaš, which was quite true. However, the partisans had supporters

among the population and the imminent operation of the German army became known to the fighters, who fled at night in wooden boats so that when the soldiers arrived there were no more partisans around Kobaš. In order to escape the feared retaliation that was often meted out to the male population, the remaining men and boys hid in the cellar of the medieval dwelling house (which now houses the above-mentioned oil mill). The cellar entrance was closed in such a way that it would not be noticed by the troops. The feared retaliation took place. However, since there were no male inhabitants, the soldiers set fire to the palazzo. As a result, the men hiding in the cellar were killed before the villagers could do anything about it. Once the soldiers had left, any help would have come too late. The fact that, despite this tragic past, we Germans are made welcome by the locals in a courteous manner, puts things in a different light. A memorial gives the names of the victims and the date: 24 October 1943 (picture 8).

On 28 June we continued along the Pelješac peninsula, reaching the harbour of Trstenik (42° 54.941'

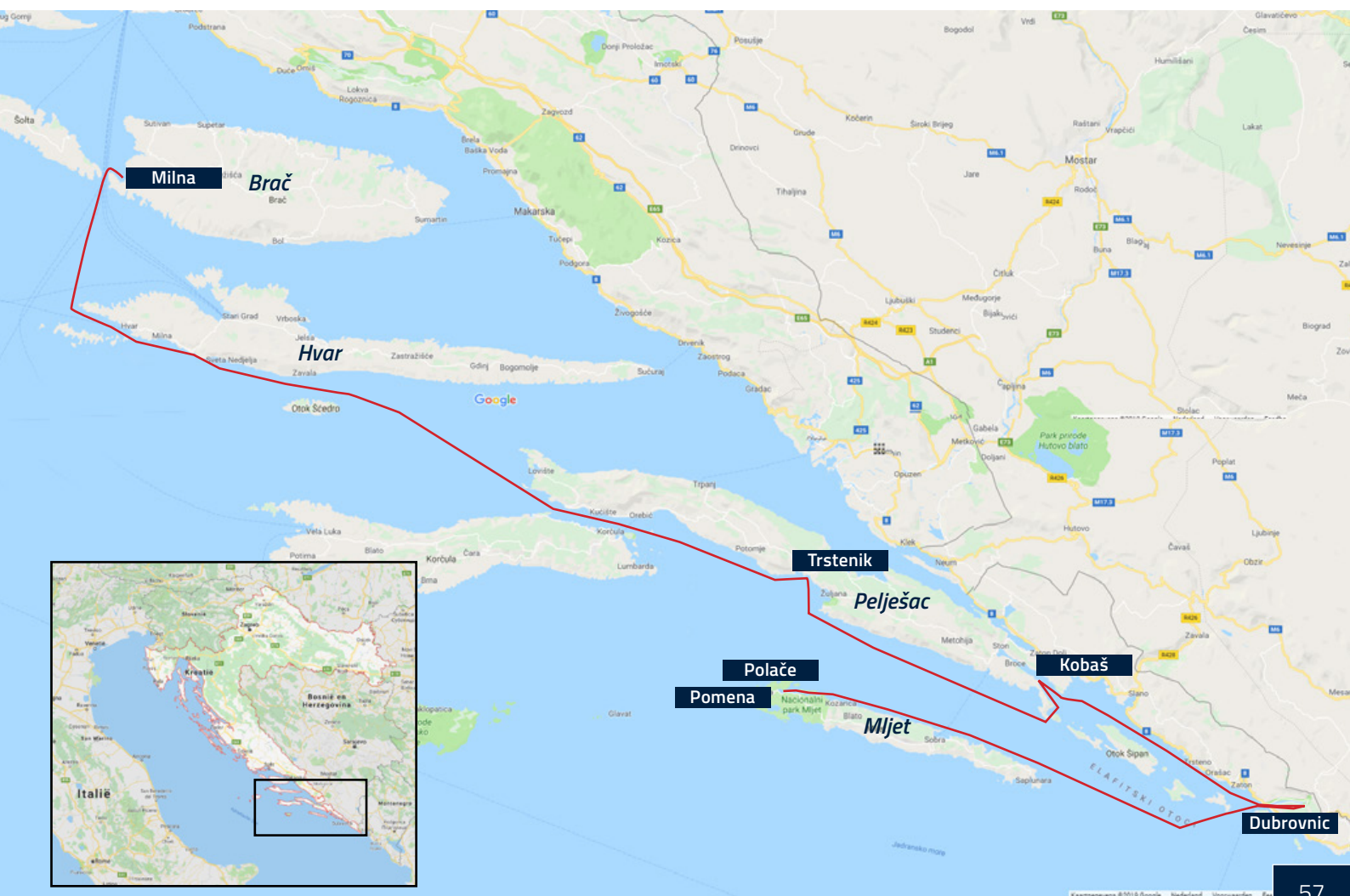
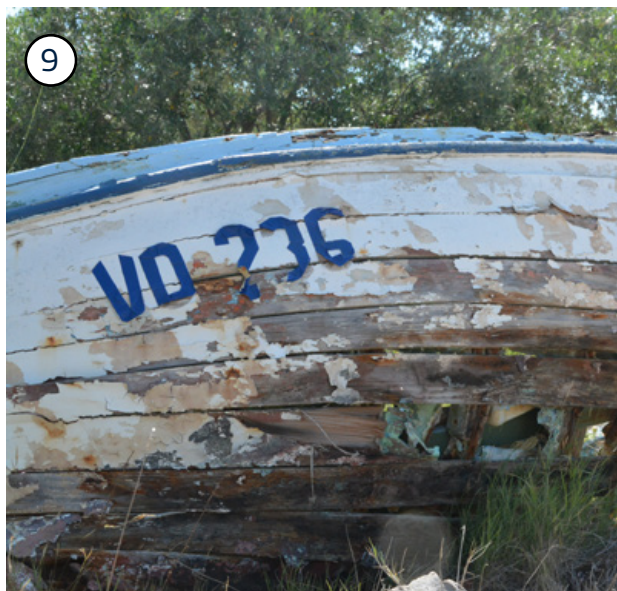
N / 17° 23.975' E) after 22 nautical miles. It is from there that the famous Pelješac wines "Dingac" and "Postup", which are produced nearby, are exported. Due to the precipitously sloping hillsides, the use of machinery is impossible, so the vineyards still require a lot of laborious manual labour to this day. However, the advantage of these slopes is that the grapes are exposed to the sun, which explains the special position of these vines. Added to this is the quality of the soil, which is said to produce the best wine in Croatia. Genetic studies prove that the "Plavac Mali" variety, for example, is listed under the internationally much better known name of "Zinfandel". Mike Grgič, one of the world's most outstanding specialists in viticulture, was born on the peninsula and later emigrated to California. Trstenik itself is one of the oldest towns on the Pelješac peninsula.

The next day, after covering 21 nautical miles, we anchored in Lovište bay (43° 01.747' N / 17° 01.385' E). Continuing our journey we travelled the Neretvanski Canal and had a look at Korčula's old town with its impressive town wall and watchtowers. After a stopover in Uvala Duga bay (island of Hvar) we moored in the Milna Marina (island of Brač). Since even an economical Linssen gets thirsty at some point and cries out for diesel, we had refuelled our "Hippo II" beforehand on the Milna canal. As is so often the case in Croatia, we encountered older and more recent history at every turn in this town of only 830 inhabitants. For example, the parish church of Our Lady of Annunciation was built in 1783, with its monumental baroque façade and a cycle of stucco work (late baroque) dating from the early 19th century. In 1800, during the Napoleonic Wars, the Russian fleet had its base in Milna.



Fishing and seafaring have left their mark everywhere you go in Croatia. As a boater, it's strangely touching to see the remains of a fishing boat. We found this on our trip on the island of Prvič (picture 9). Although the harbour on Prvič is quite small, it not only provides nice restaurants, it supplies electricity and water as well. It's a good opportunity to take a breather with some shore leave.

So much for the commercial for Croatia! It's really a wonderful cruising area. Even after the many years we have gone cruising there, we keep discovering things that mass tourism passes by. Even travel guides are sometimes incomplete, but it's not surprising either that some things slide into the background, when we think they should be in the foreground. It just depends on the observer's point of view. Perhaps that's a good thing and preserves our individuality, which skippers should possess in bagfuls.



Sunny side up...

**Sailing in Dutch and Belgian Limburg.
A feast for all the senses.**



Text: Peter Linssen. Photos: Zebra Fotostudio's. Map: Transmanche Publications

It started promisingly right away and the water was quickly up to temperature. We even had tropical moments, but there were also refreshing periods of cooling weather. In short, this was another fantastic summer. You know that feeling: when the weather is nice, you only want one thing and that is to go travelling! To pack your things and go. To experience the charm of the strange and the distant, of anonymity and tranquillity. Unfortunately, it isn't always possible to just jump on a plane. It's just as well that such experiences are perfectly possible here too, yes, here, in our own back yard! Just get aboard your boat. Every weekend if you want. And the stress seems very far away as soon as you take the first turn out of the harbour. It's like you've left on a long voyage...

Beautiful Limburg

Limburg's beautiful Meuse Valley is a unique lifeline in a remarkably sunny, warm and dry microclimate. The Meuse and the Meuse Lakes form and connect a vast, continuous network of large and small lakes, created by thousands of years of Meuse water flowing through and by decades of gravel extraction, after which the landscape and the remaining gravel pits have been beautifully redesigned. It's still not well enough known – or is it just a well-kept secret? – that the Meuse Lakes, with a surface area of over 3,000 hectares, form the largest continuous water sports area in Benelux. To get an impression of the size and

beauty of the Meuse and its lakes, you are recommended to take an introductory tour on one of the beautiful tour vessels of the Limburg shipping companies.

This water sports area with its excellent water quality is diverse and therefore a Mecca for anyone who wants to stay on or near the water. You can go boating, sailing, surfing, rowing, canoeing, swimming or diving. But there is also room for young, dynamic water sports such as water-skiing, flyboarding and wakeboarding. As well as cycling, hiking, playing sports and horse-riding on well-maintained roads alongside

the water. In the summer months, the lovely, clean beaches and trendy beach clubs are the places to be. In other words, everyone is covered. Young and old alike.

The Meuse and its lakes are a particularly pleasant and varied sailing area for larger motor or sailing boats. You can comfortably sail to and from a lake or to a harbour, village or city, navigating green, meandering waterways. Boat owners and charterers can moor and spend the night in the many atmospheric marinas, which are equipped with all the latest facilities and where the friendliest of harbour masters give you a warm welcome. Or maybe you'd prefer to be in the middle of the city, in the passer-by harbour, surrounded by nice boutiques, shops, pubs and restaurants? Or would you rather be in the middle of the countryside enjoying a BBQ? Then look for a nice spot on one of the well-constructed landing stages. Limburg has it all.

If you don't own an open sloop, motorboat or sailboat (yet) but are passionate about sailing, then chartering is definitely an option, possibly in combination with a short training or sailing course.

Living like God in France? Better yet.

You are in the Limburgs!

Over the centuries, Flemish, French, Dutch and also German cultural aspects have influenced the development of the Dutch and Belgian provinces of Limburg

and the Limburgers. This gives them their work ethic, their pleasant manner and their natural sense of savoir-vivre.

Beautiful historic towns and lovely villages on the lake shores await you. You can soak up the rich history, the unique cultural mix and great variety wherever you go or stay. Figuratively, but also literally.

In the heart of the Meuse Valley, for example, you will find Europe's northernmost pinot vineyards, on a sunny south-eastern slope in the picturesque village of Aldeneik – just a stone's throw from the town of Maaseik with its many outdoor cafés and cultural venues. It's another well-kept secret that we're only too happy to reveal.

Karel and Tine Henckens-Linssen grow excellent wines with passion on their 10 hectare Aldeneyck Wine Estate, including: Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and a sparkling Pinot Brut.

Blessed with the warm and dry microclimate in the stony Meuse Valley and the unique mineral-rich Meuse gravel terroir, they grow wines with an incomparably elegant, fruity and mineral taste. The pinot wines produced by the Aldeneyck Wine Estate have been voted Best Belgian Wine several times.

When cruising through Limburg, a visit to the tasting room on the beautiful domain is a must!
 (www.wijndomein-aldeneyck.be)

Enjoying the Meuse Valley...

Dream away and imagine ... you moor up with your brand new Linssen at the Aldeneyck vineyard and enjoy a delicious meal and a prize-winning Pinot Gris Barrique there with family and friends, sitting among the vines...

Slow down... and start living!



The Zuid-Willemsvaart. The Canal du Midi of the two Limburgs?

In 1821, the visionary 'Canal King', King William I, approved the plans for a new canal to be constructed, the Zuid-Willemsvaart. In doing so, he was continuing Napoleon Bonaparte's ambitious plan for the construction of the 'Grand Canal du Nord', some sections of which were actually completed (1803-1810) and put into use. The Neuss-Neersen section was used until 1840, as well as the Nederweert-Beringen section (Noordervaart) and the Nederweert-Lozen-Maastricht section, which later became part of the Zuid-Willemsvaart. Most of the section built in Belgium became the Kempen Canal.

On 11 November 1822, Governor De Brouckère of Limburg laid the first cornerstone at lock 1 in 's-Hertogenbosch for the Zuid-Willemsvaart, as we know it today.*

The Zuid-Willemsvaart initially became an economically and strategically important north-south waterway connection between Maastricht and 's-Hertogenbosch, and later took on a more historically important role. The canal passes through the provinces of Dutch Limburg, Belgian Limburg and Noord-Brabant. On the 123 km long route, the Zuid-Willemsvaart takes you

past wonderful natural (and hiking and cycling) areas, through one of the greenest regions of Flanders, with the Hoge Kempen National Park, Meuse Valley River Park and the Kempen-Broek Border Park as its top attractions. It is definitely worth mooring there and exploring by bike, on foot or with the dog. You are sure to be surprised by the hospitality, the local products and the varied landscape you find there. You can also visit many cities or villages, often steeped in history. Striking examples include 's-Hertogenbosch, Helmond, Weert, Bocholt, Bree, Maaseik, Neeroeteren, Dilsen-Stokkem, Maasmechelen, Lanaken and Maastricht.

The canal still has enormous economic potential in 2019. It offers great opportunities for tourism. The rich history (the mines, the wars, even a newspaper 'De Zuidwillemsvaart' was published in 1881), the beer museum in Bocholt, attractive locations such as Rekem ('Most beautiful village in Flanders'), Neeroeteren, the restaurants 't Eilandje and Oud Oteren, the Maasmechelen Village outlet centre, excellent gastronomy and much more besides, are still waiting to be discovered.

The fact that it crosses the border twice makes the canal even more exciting and unique.

Around the Limburgs. The Willems Route...



This illustrates the great historical significance of Canal King William I. A bronze statue of King William I was unveiled on 20 October 2018 on the Bisdomkaai in Ghent. Remarkable. King William I was the founder of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, which then also included Ghent. William I took important decisions that still define Ghent today. He is regarded as the founder of Ghent University in 1817, the man who commissioned the Ghent-Terneuzen canal, an important artery of Ghent's economy, and the man who made Ghent the textile capital of the continent.

Sailing without borders in Dutch and Belgian Limburg: Meuse Lakes – Border Meuse – Zuid-Willemsvaart
 In 2010, the Dutch Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management (RWS) launched the campaign 'The Willems Route: an attractive alternative for recreational shipping', with the aim of relieving the pressure on the Juliana Canal to allow the extensive renovation work for the four-layer container shipping industry. The Willems Route was promoted as an alternative route for getting from Roermond to 's-Hertogenbosch or to Maastricht and vice versa. The recommended route (from Maasbracht-Roermond) runs via the Wessem-Nederweert Canal to the Zuid-Willemsvaart. There are several convenient mooring facilities.

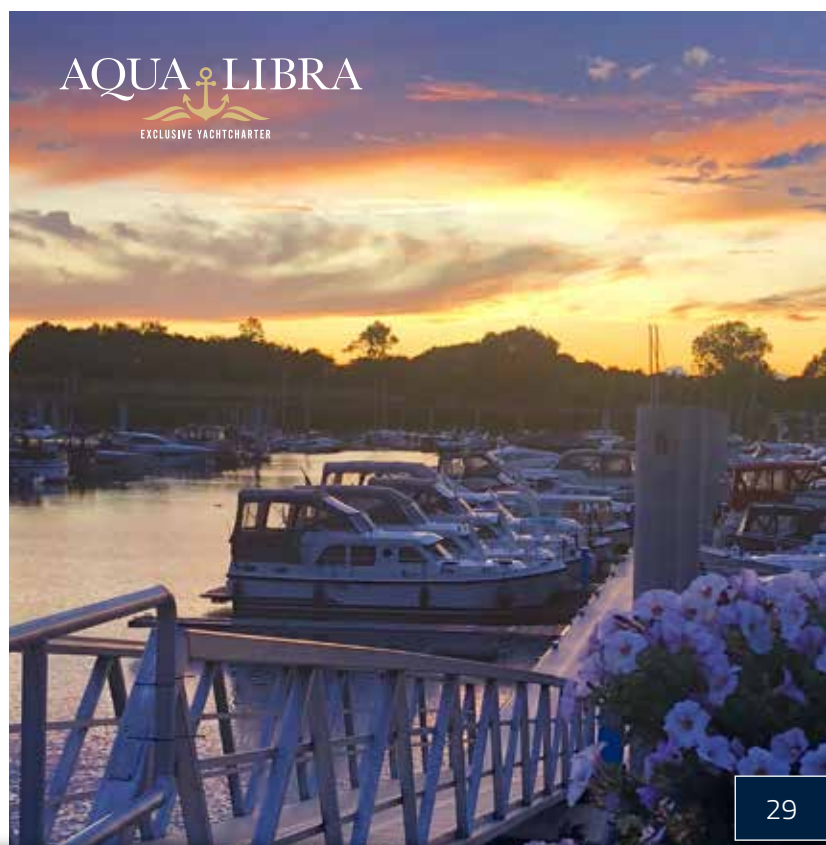
It is a beautiful route for recreational sailing, easy to navigate and quiet. The maximum clearance height on the Willems Route is five metres. The only exception to this is the historic route through Maastricht via lock 19, directly to the Bassin, with a clearance height of approximately 3.30 metres. There is an alternative route via Bosscherveld lock to get to the beautiful Bassin via a short stretch of Meuse and lock 20.

Shall we reveal another well-kept secret? A special recommendation is the 'detour' through a beautiful part of Flanders: the Bocholt-Herentals Canal and the Canal to Beverlo heading towards Lommel and Leopoldsburg.

The RWS campaign was remarkably successful and to this day this is borne out by the many enthusiastic sounds of crews who have actually sailed the Zuid-Willemsvaart.

Experience the Limburgs with Aqua Libra Yachtcharter

Aqua Libra, run by Arlette and Luc Vanthoor, is one of the few professional yacht charter companies in Limburg. Their base and home port is the De Spaanjer Marina in Kinrooi (B). Aqua Libra is a proud member of the international Linssen Boating Holidays® (LBH) network, which was created in 2006 to support the Linssen charter companies in Europe by providing an umbrella marketing label. Now, season 2019/20, fifteen LBH partners in ten countries are offering around 85 Linssen motor yachts.



Special holidays are 'in'. Sailing with your 'own' motor yacht is still, increasingly, a tempting option. Aqua Libra aims to offer its customers an impeccable and unforgettable 'boating experience' and to let them enjoy all that the Limburgs have to offer. In addition, they provide bespoke packages for companies and groups, focusing on the region's highlights in a special way.

The positive word of mouth advertising is a natural consequence of the experience their customers have had. For Arlette and Luc, the concept of hospitality is embedded in all their actions. Their number one priority is to keep their customers satisfied. They invite them to become 'members of the family' and sincerely embrace 'Mother' Linssen's slogan 'We take your pleasure seriously!®'. That is why many regular customers are convinced: 'Once Limburg. Always Limburg!'

In view of the expansion of their fleet to feature ten of the latest yachts from the Linssen range and the number of customers from distant continents and almost all European countries, Aqua Libra proves

every day that the experienced water-borne tourist has a great interest in and appreciation of Limburg as a sailing area.

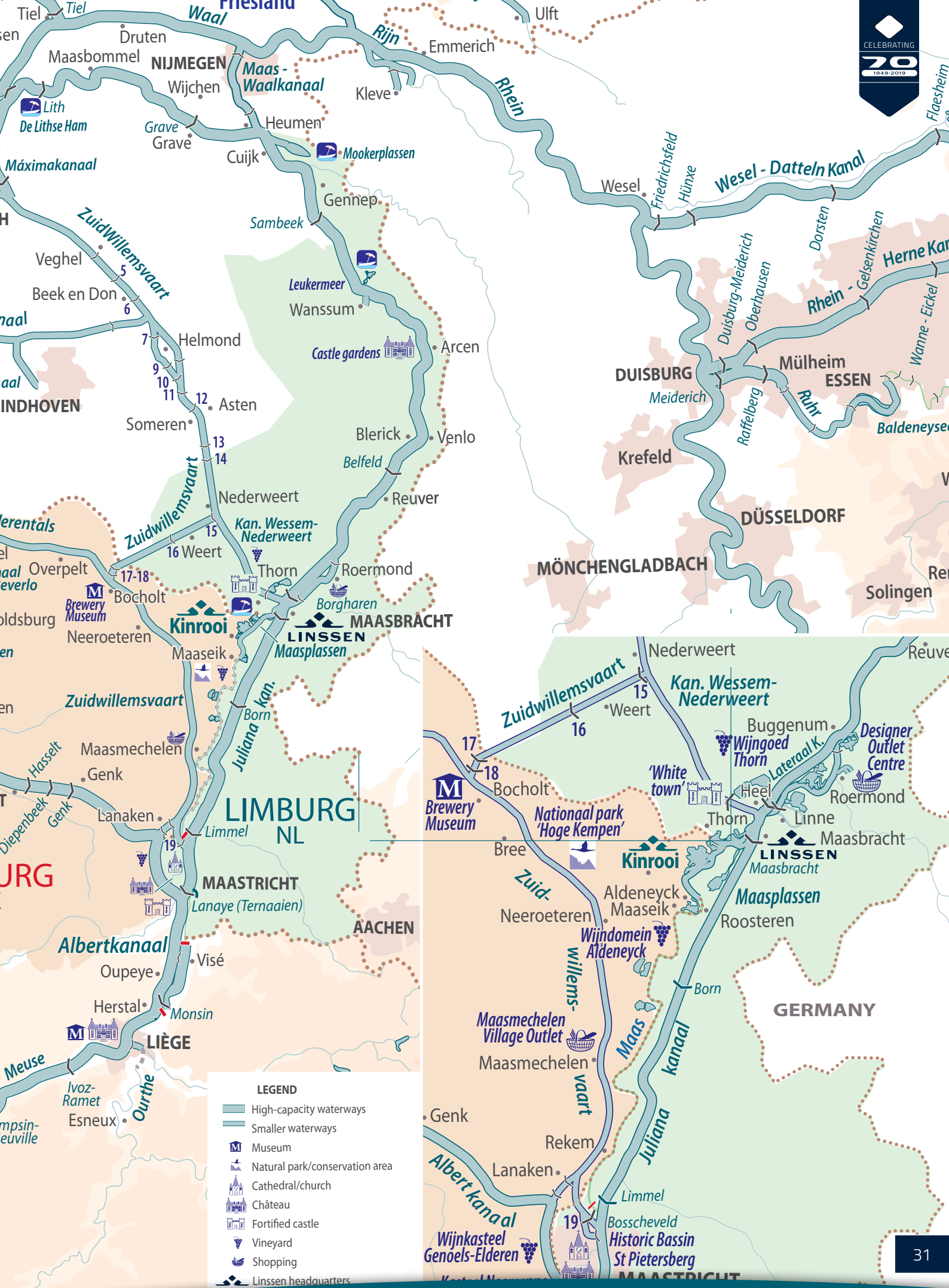
Epilogue

Limburg as a water sports destination is actually still 'a well-kept secret'. It's almost impossible to list all the facilities, providers and destinations in full. This article has only mentioned a few specific examples and we don't want to leave anything or anyone out. All the stakeholders in the region's hospitality and tourism industry stand shoulder to shoulder to make guests feel at home. With a fantastic product: Limburg. Come sailing here, and experience...

Sources:

**De geschiedenis van de Zuid-Willemsvaart, Cees Verhagen, ISBN 90-9014-027-1*

Waterway maps (ANWB, 'De Willemsroute', Waterway map of Dutch and Belgian Limburg). The Maasplassen Magazine of VVV Midden-Limburg and information about activities on and around the Meuse Lakes can be obtained from the Tourist offices in Central Limburg www.middenlimburg.nl



LEGEND

- High-capacity waterways
- Smaller waterways
- Museum
- Natural park/conservation area
- Cathedral/church
- Château
- Fortified castle
- Vineyard
- Shopping
- Linssen headquarters



Islands and a Canal: A Summer in Norway

Text and photos: Michael Backhurst

In May 2017 my wife and I and our two (long-suffering) long-haired miniature dachshunds, Ross and Sonny, arrived in Maasbracht to start our adventures on board Marylla, our new Linssen Grand Sturdy 410 AC. That first summer was spent with family and friends exploring Holland from Maasbracht to Scharendijke and then to Groningen and back to Maasbracht to overwinter at the Van der Laan yard. The summer of 2018 was a gloriously sunny one and we cruised through Germany along the Mittelland Canal to Poland, eventually following the coast west to Travemünde. Later we sailed from there to Denmark, across to Sweden and finally to Norway.

Marylla spent the winter in the Wector Yachting yard at Stathelle. Our initial plan was to spend a month going south along the east coast of Norway and in particular exploring the Blindleia (Blind Alley) between Grimstad and Kristiansand, a further month exploring the West Coast between Stavanger and Bergen and a final month on the return journey before laying up for the winter of 2019/20 at Kungshamn in Sweden. We accepted from the outset that Marylla was not primarily designed for the open seas so we knew that getting to the West Coast of Norway might not be achievable unless the weather was good enough. Many Norwegians have motor boats, but they tend to be gliders or half-gliders and can do at least 18 knots, which means they can escape bad weather, although the speed limit is generally 5 knots between the islands.

For the first three weeks the weather was variable, but we managed to sail to Kragerø, a very pretty town and then to Risør, the white town, where we stayed for several days in pouring rain. From Risør it was smooth through the islands, but it was quite bumpy when there were stretches out at sea. From there we

went through the fjord to Arendal which is a largish town with two alternative moorings: one in the centre of the town and the other in a more exposed marina. At the end of May, we left Arendal for Grimstad, where Henrik Ibsen once lived and then on a lovely sunny day we motored the 20 kilometres through the delightful narrow channels of the Blindleia to Kristiansand. We were fortunate to have 1:50,000 scale charts lent to us by friends. These charts had clear routes marked on them by kind Norwegian friends they had met in Kristiansand the year before. We stayed in Kristiansand waiting for a fair wind and flat sea to enable us to sail around the exposed south coast and then north to Stavanger. Due to strong winds and heavy rain we had to stay there for two weeks and abandoned our initial plans.

We therefore turned north and retraced our steps, revisiting Grimstad and Risør, with much greater confidence than on the journey south.

By the end of June, we were back in Stathelle and decided to go up the Telemark Canal. The weather was now quite sunny and although it did not last, the temperature reached 28°C one day on the canal at Lunde, which was the highest we experienced in 2019.

The Telemark Canal was built between 1861 and 1892 to bring timber down from the mountains. It runs from the town of Skien near Larvik for a distance of 105 kilometres to Dalen in the southern mountains, taking in eight locks involving 18 chambers and three large lakes. The scenery is spectacular throughout and we are told that the northern sector on Lake Bandak is not unlike the Norwegian Fjords on the west coast. The advantage for us with our two dogs was that friends and family who were due to visit would be able to follow a plan without being overly dependent on the weather.

We were one of the larger boats using the canal and whilst most locks were 100ft long, we were pleased when we had a lock to ourselves or with one other boat in front of us, in particular when ascending. All the locks, except one, are manually operated, principally by students, who drop lines fore and aft as boats enter and when there are multiple chambers, they retrieve them and drop them down in the next chamber.

We opted for a summer pass at a total cost of about £400 which included all the locks and use of the canal and lakeside moorings and pump-out stations but not, as we later learnt, all the marinas. The canal is only open to private boats from 21 June to 15 August, although the three steamers that ply the canal operate throughout the summer.

Boats with an air draft of less than 12.8m are able to navigate the whole canal and boats with an air draft of more than 12.8m and less than 16m can go as far as the Ulefoss locks and then up the northern part of Lake Norsjø as far as Notodden.

We left the Wector Yard near Stathelle and headed up Frierfjorden to Skien where we entered our first lock, which is the official entrance to the canal and where you buy the pass.

On exiting the lock, we motored a further five miles to the flight of three locks at Skotfoss. The channel



The Pollen, Arendal

was quite narrow in places but clearly marked with topmarks on poles showing which way we had to go. We arrived at the eastern end of the Løveid locks just before 5.00 pm where we decided to spend the night. Shortly after, the bow of the steamer Victoria appeared towering above us in the lock before descending. She was built in 1878 and has been in constant use on the canal ever since.

The next morning was pleasantly warm with little or no wind. At about 9 am we watched the Victoria ascending (now on the upstream journey to Dalen where she arrives about 6 pm). We were called into the lock at 9.30 am, a little fearful as the three flights rising in a narrow gorge looked quite daunting, but in the end we climbed up all three chambers easily, emerging in less than an hour onto Lake Norsjø, a long and attractive lake which reminded us of larger lochs in the Scottish Highlands.

After breakfast we motored the six miles across the lake to Ulefoss, having an impromptu MOB drill en route when our dog, Ross, lost his favourite ball over the side. It was successfully retrieved with the aid of a fishing net and boat hook!

Beautiful city of Risør, Norway



Entrance to Blindleia





The Løveid locks on the Telemark canal

We arrived at the Ulefoss locks and decided to spend the night in the marina and enjoy the sunshine and most importantly, it seems these days, to catch up on emails. Our experience in Norway is that as few marinas have good Wi-Fi connections, the best place to catch up with the world is to find the nearest Co-Op shop.

The next morning, we awoke to another lovely day with a flat sea. The forecast was for a hot day and we were pleased that a breeze was likely to pick up as the day went on, which is the norm in this part of Norway. After breakfast, we decided to pump out the black water tank. As often happens, we didn't have the right connection between the boat deck fitting and the shore pump but with the help of the bag of spares lent to us by the harbourmaster (who also ran the marina café) we went alongside in less than 1.5 metres of water and managed the pump-out with ease. We still don't understand why most of the pump-out stations we have come across, both in Norway and elsewhere, either do not work or are inaccessible to all but the shallowest draught vessels. Surely if countries want boat owners to protect the environment and pump out, they should provide the equipment to do so in a place which is reasonably accessible to all potential users. As a result of the time spent pumping out, we

did not leave Ulefoss until noon and had to wait at the lock for about three-quarters of an hour while the Henrik Ibsen descended. At all times on the Telemark Canal pleasure boats have to give way to the steamers. Finally, we were called into the first chamber behind a Norwegian Grand Banks type motorboat of about 40 ft with whom we were to stay for all of the locks during the next two days. It was hard work and we were extremely relieved to have the large balloon fenders (at least a metre in diameter) which were lent to us on arrival and which we were allowed to keep until we returned on the downstream journey. We were through the two flights of Ulefoss by 2.30 pm and then enjoyed a pleasant motor up to the Eidsfoss lock with lunch en route, arriving about 3.30 pm, when we were told we had about an hour to wait for the two Steamers, Victoria and Telemark (the third and smallest steamer) to come through. They arrived about 4.00 pm when we were asked to pull back to give them room to manoeuvre. On exiting the lock, we were told that the crew at Vrangfoss locks would wait for our arrival if we wished to push through that day. We opted to do this and arrived at the five-flight lock at about 5.20 pm, exiting at 6.10 pm.

The next morning, we took a walk to a viewpoint with

Steamer Victoria on the Telemarc Canal

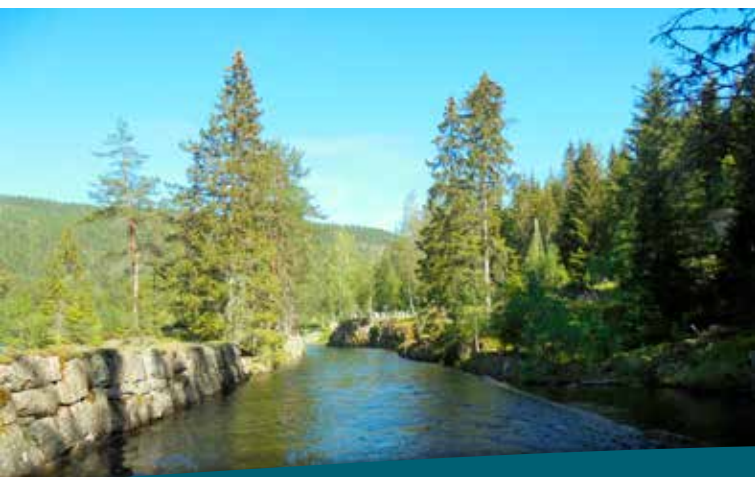
lovely views over the mini waterfalls on the rock face. We left the mooring late morning and motored the six miles to Lunde lock. The scenery, which was becoming much more mountainous, reminded us of Switzerland. All the way up we had been leaving the white channel markers to starboard and the red to port. Why white? We suspect this is because green markers would blend in too easily with the trees. On arriving at Lunde lock we were told that two steamers (the Victoria ascending and the Henrik Ibsen descending) were about to come through and there were two more boats ahead of us waiting to be lifted. We pulled back so as to allow the Telemark, which stops there, to turn around. It was the one and only time that we came across all three steamers at the same place at almost the same time. There is a good marina next to a campsite on the northern side of the lock where we spent the night. The two supermarkets are about a kilometre away.

Next morning, we left at 10.00 am going into Kjeldal lock, which was open and waiting for us, at 10.15 am. The final lock was the double chamber at Hogga where we arrived at 10.40 am.

We tied up at 11.15 am to the NW of the lock for breakfast and walk the dogs with rain threatening and much cooler than the day before. Away again by midday and still on the canal, we passed the Victoria heading towards Skien. By 1.00 pm we were halfway down Lake Flåvatn when there were a few short sharp showers. The scenery was very attractive, becoming more dramatic and steep-sided and hills looking more like mountains. The water in the lake was very deep, ranging from 76m to 120m.

The canal between Flåvatn and Kviteseid is very narrow at its eastern end and at one point it was difficult to see where it went until we were right on top of it.

Narrowest part of the Telemarc Canal between Flåvatn and Kviteseid



At the entrance to Kviteseid, where we planned to spend the night, there are two bridges across the channel, the first very high but the second, a swing bridge, had an air draft of 4m. Our air draft is 3.8m with the mast down and I was reluctant to pass under it, especially as the swing bridge was due to open an hour later. When we approached, the lady bridge operator was waiting and opened the road barriers and the bridge for us.

Thereafter it was only a short motor of about half an hour to the marina at Kviteseid where we moored, with some difficulty, with a strong beam wind pushing us off.

The next day, we woke to a sunny but windy morning and so decided to stay put.

Kviteseid is a good place to stay with marina fees at about £15 per night inclusive of water and electricity and with several shops.

After four nights we left Kviteseid and arrived at the swing bridge at 10.45 am, just in time as the morning opening time was between 09.00 am and 11.00 am. We initially thought the bridge operator had gone home but a toot on the horn brought him back and we passed through with waves all round.

Shortly afterwards, we reached the bridge at Spjotsodd. This was the beginning of a long interconnecting channel leading to Lake Bandak. By the time we arrived there, the wind had freshened and the lake was quite choppy.

Despite the wind and spray, it was an easy and enjoyable journey up Lake Bandak, Ross was a little uneasy and sat on Marie-Louise's lap, but Sonny was much happier and seemed to be finding his sea legs!

At 11.45 am we were abeam of Lardal, which is six miles to the east of Dalen, and decided to stay there for the rest of the day and overnight. It was very quiet, and we were the only boat there. There was no water or electricity but no mooring fee either.

The dogs woke me at 06.15 am the next day to a fine but cold morning with a temperature of only 8°C.



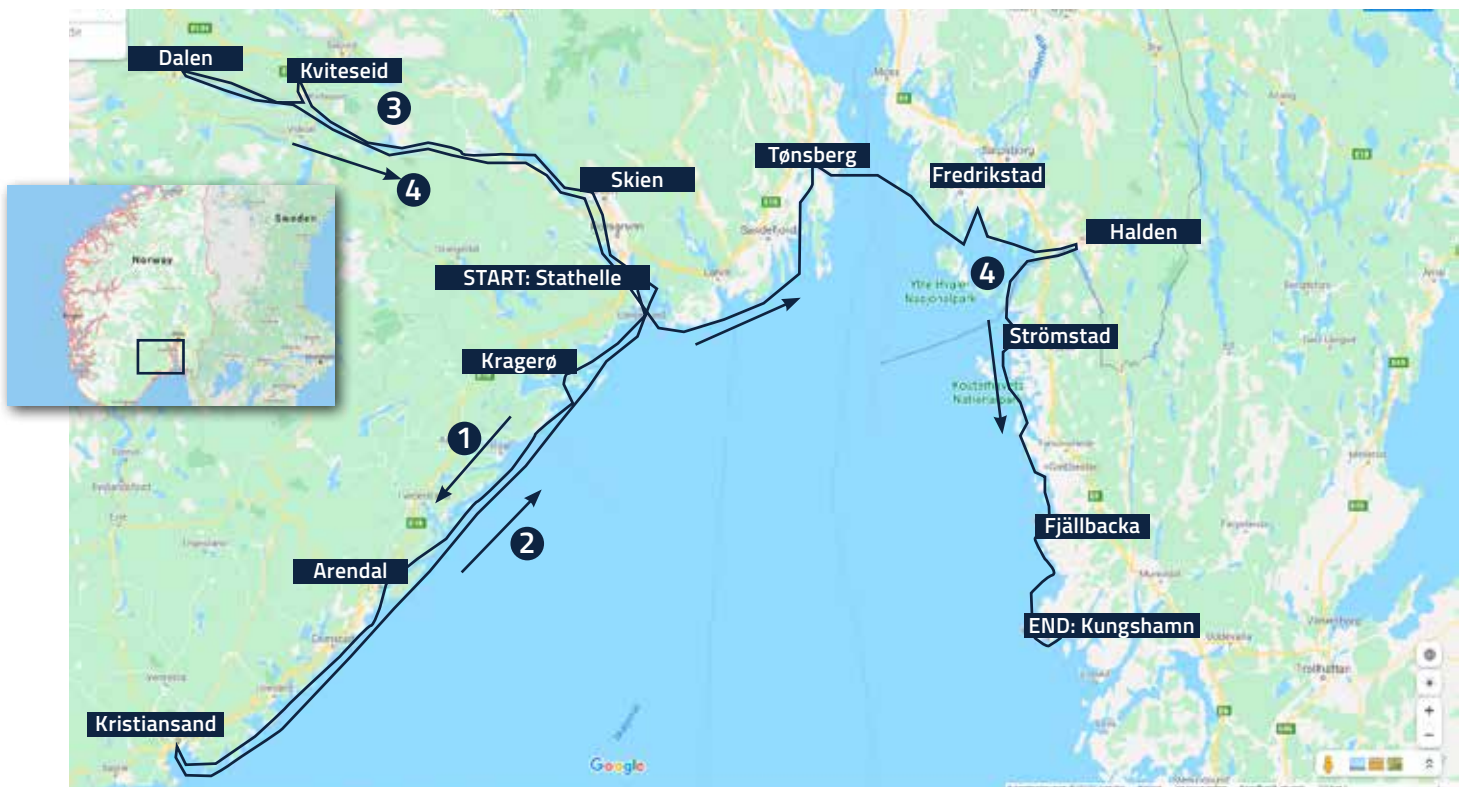
Leaving Dalen on lake Bandak



Lake Norsjø, a long and attractive lake which reminded us of larger lochs in the Scottish Highlands.

The depth sounder was behaving erratically which I later realised was due to the depth of water on Lake Bandak which at its maximum depth of 325 metres sometimes exceeded the working parameters of our depth sounder. We motored slowly up Lake Bandak at about 5 knots enjoying the weather and the views and arrived at Dalen in about an hour. Dalen has moorings for about six large boats and several smaller ones, with strong pontoons and cleats, water and electricity and only 100 Norwegian Kroner a night or 70 Kr without electricity. It is interesting that the motor homes in the adjoining camp site run by the same people charged 300 Kr or 250 Kr without electricity.

Over the next few days, while waiting for two grandsons to arrive, we explored the coastal trails around Dalen. There were lovely views, colours and wildflowers. The rivers and streams from the mountains were running fast. This explained the downstream current on the lakes and canals and also the drop in water temperature from 20°C lower down to 8°C at Dalen. With our two grandsons on board, the downward trip was swift, and we were back in Stathelle in three days. We stayed in the pretty town of Brevik and then explored the aptly named inlet of Paradisbukta on the island of Håøya where our grandsons could swim.



On a later trip, again with very variable weather, we took Marylla from Stathelle to Stavern, then to Tønsberg where there is an interesting museum with old houses. After a few days waiting for the weather we crossed the lower part of Oslo Fjord to the well-known and delightful island of Hankø which is a famous place for Norwegian sailors. By now the season was almost finished, so there were only a couple of other boats there. Going to Fredrikstad was a pleasant journey through islands and then up the channel to the new town where we stayed just by the first bridge. The small ferries make staying in the town quite bumpy. Again, because of bad weather we stayed there for several days, exploring the old fortress town by ferry. When three of our friends joined us, we left for Halden and had a beautiful day with a stop at a new marina at Endholm en route. Halden has a nice harbour surrounded by restaurants and a castle on the hill above. The rain did not stop us exploring, and we walked along the Halden canal which had just closed.

From Halden we had a pleasant trip to Strömstad across the border in Sweden, which was very busy with Norwegian boats whose owners were using the weekend to buy duty free. We were lucky to be invited to moor alongside another Linssen Grand Sturdy 410AC "De Goede Fee" whose Swiss owners were very friendly. The harbourmaster was very helpful. The sun then shone for a further two days while we wended our way to the pretty town of Fjällbacka where Ingrid Bergman had a summer house on one of the islands. Then another lovely day through the Hamburgsund to our new winter storage with West Boat at Kungshamn, where Marylla is safely indoors and ready for our next adventures in Sweden in 2020. Although it was not quite the summer we had planned, we met very friendly Norwegians and saw a lot of Norway with many lovely places which are waiting to be explored another time.



Vita Nova - Summer cruise on the Grevelingenmeer

Text and Photos: Sven Rehn / Classic Sturdy 360 AC Vita Nova

Summer cruise 2020 - After the very late start of the season we wanted to really enjoy our summer cruise. As well as transferring to our new home port, we took a trip to the Grevelingenmeer and spent many pleasant hours on the water. It's a cruise report that will inspire you to follow in our wake, I promise.

Before the sailing fun, Neptune (or was it Poseidon?) set out our work for us. We had to provision Vita Nova for the trip. Fresh food and drink were stowed away just before the start of the cruise, and 370 litres of water were pumped into the tanks, so that we could wash up and also have a shower or two on the way. The two diesel tanks were each about 75-80 litres short. We would top them up once we were underway.

We'd been flirting with the idea of getting new deck chairs for some time. And the time was just right, so we quickly drove to the Kampeer Oase in Elst to buy new chairs for the cockpit. We decided on the Crespo Air Deluxe.

We have the latest digital map material on four devices (iPad Air2, iPad Pro, 2x iPhone) to ensure reliability. As we were setting off on the cruise, we had no idea just how important the map material would turn out to be. We had been using the Navionics "Boating" app for many years. We really appreciated its functionali-

ties, the daily updates and the community edits. We've already written an article about it.

Day 1:

We cast off from our home port of t Loo in Linden at 7:30 on 19 June 2020, as we were keen to get to know new ports and the Grevelingenmeer. Being "early birds", we love to get underway promptly. The waterways were wonderfully empty and we were left alone to enjoy the silence and the countryside for some time.

Comfortably and quietly the Volvo Penta pushed us through the Kraaijenbergse Plassen towards the Meuse. We turned to port on to the Meuse at kilometre 167.

We were already quite familiar with the Meuse in this area from our Roermond - Biesbosch cruise. Kilometres 167 to 176 on the river were fun and the joy of cruising was unbounded. At KM 176 we came to the first lock of the day. Grave lock. They can be con-

tacted via VHF channel 20 or by telephone on 0031-88 797 4142. We duly reported in properly shortly before reaching the lock harbour. Due to poor voice quality, no exchange was possible. We moored at the leisure craft jetty in the outer harbour and waited.

A commercial vessel came out of the lock. The traffic light was and stayed red, and the lock gate closed again. After another inquiry at the lock, communication improved. The commercial vessels were bumper-to-bumper in the tailwater so the lock was emptying quickly. After an hour and a half we sailed the Vita Nova out of the lock in the tailwater. Now we had a few kilometres of free motoring in which to enjoy the Meuse and the surrounding countryside. Time and again we had to stay alert when we passed one of the many ferries. It can sometimes seem as if the ferries are waiting for you to get close up and then set off. Whatever, as Michael Wendler would sing.

We passed Niftrik and De Gouden Ham in Maasbommel and called ahead shortly before reaching the outer harbour of Prinses Maxima lock (VHF channel 22 or telephone 0031-88 7944135) at kilometre 200 for the downhill lock. A commercial vessel came out and we were able to sail right in without waiting. It went like clockwork.

Now we had only about four kilometres to get to the jetty in De Lithse Ham marina. We moored at the registration jetty and then moved the Vita Nova into Box 46. It had been a leisurely and relaxing day's cruising. Now the ship's dog was allowed out and afterwards the crew got something to eat.

We paid €18.45 for one night (boat size: 11 m x 3.6 m).

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 42 km | Locks: 2 | Engine hours: 4



Day 2:

What a day – more eventful than expected.

Cast off at 7:30 from De Lithse Ham marina. The harbour is OK for an overnight stay. That's all you need. Although the marina is in a beautiful location, it has no real ambiance. Although there were a few boats at the jetties, the place looked half dead.

Today we had planned to cover about 47 kilometres and arrive at a convenient jetty in Aakvlaai or Biesbosch. Apart from a few encounters with ferries, cruising down the Meuse to the Amer was again quite leisurely and relaxing. As we had made good time, we were looking forward to getting to the jetty early. We know the area (Biesbosch/Aakvlaai) from 2016, when we had an annual berth there. It must have been due to the circumstances (Corona, weather, etc.), but it was much busier than usual. There was no suitable berth to be had for the Vita Nova in Aakvlaai. Most of the best jetties were no longer available, which further reduced the number of berthing options.

So we left Aakvlaai and went back into the Biesbosch, where we also knew two or three great moorings.





Jachthaven Biesbosch, Drimmelen

How could it be otherwise, they were all occupied too. An excursion boat followed in our wake. We waited until we reached a suitable spot and then let it pass. The draft of the Vita Nova (1.10 m) is close to the limit for the Biesbosch. As anyone familiar with the area knows... it's a freshwater tidal area and a difference in level of 20-30 cm is normal there. If you have 40 cm! (0.4 m) water under the keel as you sail along, you ought to know the area and its peculiarities! Thanks to our rather outdated knowledge of the area and up-to-date maps from Navionics, we made it through the entire Biesbosch without touching the bottom. As already mentioned at the beginning of the cruise report, you can have problems in the Biesbosch if your maps aren't up to date! We're glad to report that we came through safely thanks to the daily sonar chart updates provided by Navionics! As we didn't want to drop anchor, we decided to sail right through the Biesbosch, turn to port on to the Amer at Hollandsch Diep and call at our 2016 home port. The journey through Aakvlaai and Biesbosch extended the planned stage by 27 kilometres and three hours' sailing. Sometimes it's worth leaving even earlier.

We moored in the Biesbosch Drimmelen marina at 14:10, where jetty neighbours helped us to tie up. The marina had also been hospitable and well organised back in 2016.

Now the ship's dog was the first one off to lift his leg while the crew took care of the formalities in the new harbourmaster's office.

We paid €26.00 for one night (boat size: 11 m x 3.6 m).

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 76 km | Locks: 0 | Engine hours: 7,5 h

Day 3:

Yesterday we were treated to a great sunset in the Biesbosch marina. It had been a quiet night and we cast off the lines as the sun was rising over the Biesbosch. We sailed along the Amer under the Moerdijk bridges to the Hollandsch Diep and on to Willemstad. The Hollandsch Diep separates North Brabant from South Holland and is about two kilometres wide. Some commercial vessels were around but, due to the vastness of the Hollandsch Diep, it was a very leisurely journey. Especially since two extremely generous stretches of water are set aside for leisure craft.

It was a leisurely day's cruising. We were sailing from 7:35 to 10:10, covering just under 30 kilometres. We then settled into the "De Batterij" marina at jetty G-14, which we had already reserved by phone the day before. That worked out wonderfully.

We completed the administrative procedures in the marina and enjoyed the rest of the day. But we also take time to take pictures of Willemstad. We had been tipped off that we should definitely call at Willemstad on our trip. That was a really good tip. Willemstad is a beautiful town and a pleasant place to stroll and linger. From the marina you can reach the town in under

10 minutes. If you're in the town harbour, it's only five steps up to the promenade with shops and a few restaurants. We walked once completely around the town (3.4 km) and then settled down in a restaurant at the harbour. The harbour appears to be a very popular meeting place. Many motorcyclists had parked their motorcycles there in order to fortify themselves on their tour as well.

We paid €25.29 for one night (boat size: 11 m x 3.6 m).

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 15 km | Locks: 0 | Engine hours: 2,6 h

Day 4:

Willemstad to Bruinisse

We cast off from the De Batterij marina shortly after 7:00. We wanted to leave early again to get through the locks. All three locks have special sections for leisure craft. Calling ahead by radio worked great.

In front of the Volkerak lock, we met the Linsen Grand Sturdy 460 - Quincy. As we had the same destination for the day, we decided to travel together.

The short ride from Willemstad via the Hollandsch Diep was quick and easy. We had to wait 20 minutes in front of the Volkerak lock.

The locks (all three!) were easy to handle and thanks to the small lift they were always completed in 15 minutes (pure lock time). Coming from Willemstad, the Volkerak and Krammer locks sluice downhill and the Grevelingen lock then runs uphill.

Cruising in the Volkerak was leisurely and was similar to the part of the IJsselmeer that comes before

Lemmer. There were many wind turbines and a lot of water, wonderful. The fairways are so wide that commercial vessels and leisure craft don't get in each other's way. Great! We were lucky with the weather too. The water and the sky were equally blue. Really beautiful.

The crew of the Quincy had a moment of shock. An OK steel displacement yacht cut the Quincy up so close that it would have crashed into the rear of the displacement yacht if it had not fully stopped. Totally unimpressed by blasts of the horn and the near collision, the steel displacement yacht continued on its way. Incredible and really a close-run thing.

If any of you encounter this displacement yacht, be very careful!

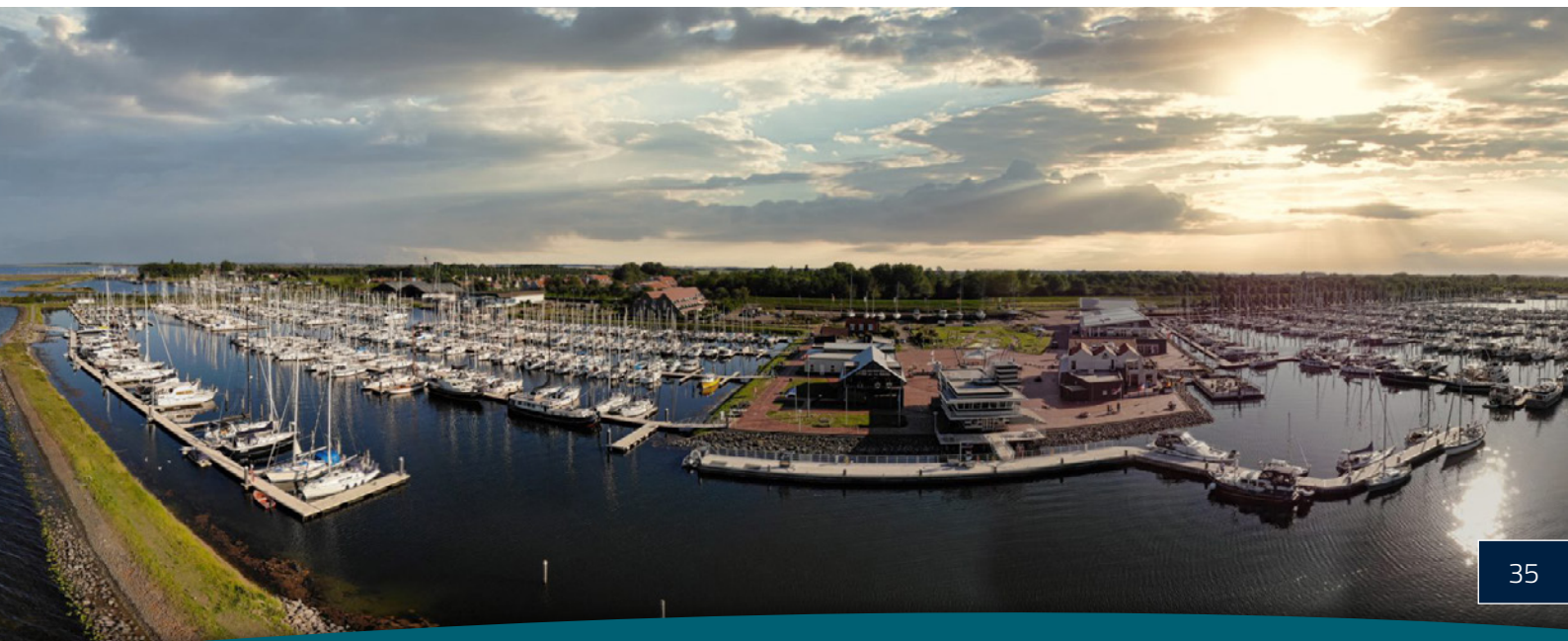
In the Krammer and Grevelingen locks, things got a bit busier, with 7-10 boats passing through at the same time. You notice straight away when the lock gate opens and you have salt water under the keel. The smell is unmistakable.

Only a few hundred metres after leaving the Grevelingen lock we turned to port together with the Quincy into the Bruinisse marina. Both Linsens had been given a place at the registration jetty and were allowed to stay there overnight.

All I can say about Bruinisse marina is that it's really big and well equipped. Sheer poetry! The sanitary building was new and was very well maintained. It had showers with hand basin and mirror and plenty of space.

In the marina we also got the sticker that allowed us

Jachthaven Bruinisse





Grevelingenmeer

to moor at the vacant berths in the Grevelingenmeer (€12.50 per week).

After Day 6 you will find many answers to questions about the Grevelingenmeer itself, which we were asked during the trip.

As our fresh food was slowly running out, we decided to visit the nearby Albert Heijn supermarket on our e-scooters. It's only 1.8 kilometres from the marina. So we drove the route twice and, in addition to the fresh food, we also stowed away 45 litres of fresh water. This worked really well with the e-scooters.

Early the next morning (but not sooo early), we would fill the water and diesel tanks.

Then we would be off to the Grevelingenmeer.

We paid €32.29 for one night (boat size: 11 m x 3.6 m).

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 29 km | Locks: 3 | Engine hours: 3,2 h

Day 5:

We started the day at 8:00 by filling the fresh water tanks and hauling the Vita Nova 50 metres to the filling station, which is located right next to the registration jetty in front of the harbour office. We have two 250-litre diesel tanks (a total of 500 litres), and had already used up an estimated 200 litres on our trip. We told the harbourmaster to fill her up.

Result: two spills, diesel on the gangway and a lot of rags used. We filled up with 178.51 litres at €1.24 per litre, making a total of €221.35.

As of that day, we would be in the Grevelingenmeer for one week. It's the largest salt-water lake in Europe. Our first port of call was at "Dwars in Den Weg" island near Stampersplaat, virtually opposite the Brouwershaven, and just under 14 kilometres from Bruinisse marina and one of the southernmost ports of call in the Grevelingenmeer. You can berth on the inside (cleats) and outside (wooden posts) of the jetty. Water depth is about 3 metres. The jetty leads ashore, so it was ideal for the ship's dog. Waste bins are also provided. The journey from Bruinisse to Dwars in Den Weg was leisurely and made for some great photography. Our Mavic Air drone was also in the air again. We enjoyed the day and we would see how long we would stuck around.

Basically, we would still be calling at the Brouwersdam at Port Zélande and the archipelago, as we had plenty of time.

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 8 km | Locks: 0 | Engine hours: 1,3 h

Day 6:

The Vita Nova moved on. From "Dwars in Den Weg," we entered the Grevelingen Archipelago. Only about eight kilometres (through the safe fairway) separate the two moorings.

So our trip only took about 43 minutes. As we had been given a fantastic berth, we intended to make full use of the three days we were allowed to moor there. We then headed to the far west of the Grevelingenmeer. We head for one of the two natural

harbours and anchorages at the Brouwersdam. They are located in the immediate vicinity of Port Zélande and Renesse.

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 9 km | Locks: 0 | Engine hours: 0,8 h

Day 7:

Nothing is as constant as change. And this is especially true of the weather. Actually, we wanted to stay two more days in the archipelago. But then the storm that had been forecast changed our plans. We didn't want to experience rain, thunderstorms and gusts of wind up to 50 km/h unprotected in an unknown area.

The lovely weather... 28-32 degrees. Sun-soaked. But as every skipper knows... nothing lasts for ever – the weekend was set to bring thunderstorms and a lot of wind. In gusts of up to 50 km/h. Especially around Scharendijke it was forecast to be extremely and continuously windy. Otherwise, it would be blowing hard on the Grevelingenmeer and also the Hollandsch Diep. It was set to be very windy until Tuesday, 30 June 2020.

We therefore rescheduled our plans. The Vita Nova left the archipelago and set off for the Brouwersdam/Scharendijke. Unfortunately, the two natural jetties were full up. Boats were even rafting up. Neither was there any more space to be had in the beautifully situated "Haven aan de Middelpmaat" marina. Too bad – about the location. The marina itself is tiny and hardly worth a visit.



Jachthaven Bruinisse

When we moored in Bruinisse marina again, a large yacht was just leaving:

Once again we paid €32.29 for one night.

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 27 km | Locks: 0 | Engine hours: 1,9 h

Day 8:

Bruinisse to Heusden

The previous evening we had been treated to a beautiful sunset, which we would like to share with you.

That day, as planned, we made good progress. The Vita Nova got 81.3 kilometres under its keel in just under eight and a quarter hours, including three locks: Grevelingen, Krammer, and Volkerak.

We set off with a beautiful sunrise at 6:45. Only 20 minutes later we were registering at the first lock

Heusden



Some information on the Grevelingenmeer:

During our trip to Grevelingen (as the annual visitors refer to the Grevelingenmeer) we were asked questions through various channels. We'd like to answer these questions briefly below.

The Grevelingenmeer is the largest salt-water lake in Europe. Its salinity is very close to that of the North Sea. There are no tides (ebb and flow) in the Grevelingenmeer. The enclosure formed by Grevelingen lock and Brouwersdam has created a lake that defies the tides.

You have to buy a vignette for the Grevelingenmeer, available from one of the local harbours, if you want to moor at one of the many natural jetties. There are two different vignettes: a weekly vignette (€12.50 - June 2020) and an annual vignette (€49.00 - June 2020). When you buy the annual vignette, you also get a flag. This is flown from the mast throughout the year and enables the inspectors to see from a distance that you are in possession of the vignette. The weekly vignette should be accessible at all times. A check was carried out at the moorings every day we were there.

The rules for unrestricted mooring in the Grevelingenmeer are as follows:

Holders of the vignette may stay at a berth for three days at a time. They must then change to another berth and may not return within a radius of 1,000 m of the old berth for five days.

These rules are supervised. The name of your boat and date of arrival at the berths are noted. We don't know what the penalty is for disobeying the rules.

All the berths we visited were provided with waste bins, which were emptied or replaced EVERY DAY. The berths are in a spotless condition. For example, there are even two toilets on the archipelago.

The German inland leisure craft licence is valid for cruising the Grevelingenmeer.

Salt water and the subject of anodes.

All owners who only go on holiday trips to Grevelingen will probably not replace their anodes just for this. We didn't either. After talking to other owners, we don't think this is necessary for short periods such as holiday trips. We relied on this and our magnesium anodes didn't suffer any damage as a result of our week on Grevelingen.

As the Grevelingenmeer is very shallow in many places, you should stay within the fairway. This will safely get you from A to B. The deepest point is 48 m. With the exception of two marked high-speed routes before Bruinisse and Port Zélande, the speed limit on the entire Grevelingenmeer is 15 km/h!

Information from Wikipedia.org - > Grevelingen (Netherlands)

Grevelingen is situated between the islands of Schouwen-Duiveland (province of Zeeland) and Goeree-Overflakkee (province of Zuid-Holland). On the west side, facing the North Sea, Grevelingen is closed off by the Brouwersdam and, on the east side, facing the Oosterschelde, by the Grevelingendam. A lock was built for shipping at Bruinisse on the Oosterschelde. In this way the largest salt-water lake in Europe was created with a total area of 140 km². The water surface area is 11,000 hectares, of which 7,000 hectares are over 1.50 metres deep. The lake is 23 km long and 4-10 km wide. It is 48 m deep at its greatest depth and the water level is on average 0.20 m below NAP.

Like everywhere else, the weather can change quite fast. As the Grevelingenmeer is a large open area, the winds there should not be underestimated. Coming across the North Sea, they can reach quite considerable speeds. And then you can really feel the waves. As in every cruising area, you should prepare yourself accordingly and leave some room in your time schedule.

We were in the Grevelingenmeer during the low season (June 2020). Various locals told us it would be very empty in the low season. We can confirm this to some extent. At all berths, except for the far west at Scharendijke, we were always able to obtain a berth at the much sought-after free moorings. There, however, boats were already starting to raft up during the low season. How the situation changes during the high season and holiday period, we couldn't say.

However, as the locals say "when the German summer holidays begin, Zeeland sinks by a good metre".

(Grevelingen). That day, passing through all three locks was very smooth and easy.

We sailed from Bruinisse to Krammer lock via Noorder Slaak and Krammer. It took about 20 minutes.

We had hardly got through the yacht lock when we were on Noord-Krammer and turned starboard towards Zuid-Vlije.

We then sailed through the Hellegat fairway to Volkerak yacht lock via Volkerak. It took us a leisurely and peaceful two hours.

Coming out on to the Hollandsch Diep, we passed the Willemstad marina on the starboard side. As always, our early departure paid off. With a few exceptions, we were almost alone on the fairways. Added to that were the morning light and the expanse of water... just perfect.

A couple of commercial vessels then appeared at the Moerdijk bridges, but that's all.

It wasn't until we were off Biesbosch/Aakvlaai and Drimmelen that the number of pleasure craft began to increase rapidly.

Hardly surprising... it was Friday afternoon and we were having great weather.

The fact that virtually nobody adhered to the speed limits to avoid wakes and swell but regarded them as recommendations that needn't be followed, made us

a little annoyed. Shaking our heads, we accepted the conditions. What else can you do?

We continued our journey via the Amer to the Bergsche Maas canal.

No matter whether in front of harbours or ferries, the jet skis and speedboats were going as fast as their engines would allow.

A trend that really makes us think.

But it's not only the riders of glider yachts who should perhaps be rethought the effect on wave propagation.

This displacement yacht travelled for kilometres like this. It's really difficult to understand why. No commercial vessel that we encountered along the way produced a stern wave this big. What goes on in these people's heads?

But we were making good progress with all that variety around.

It was well over 30 degrees when we reached our destination, the De Wiel marina in Heusden, a little drained as a result of the long boat ride.

Nevertheless, mooring at the jetty in box G-4 went well and, after phoning to make an appointment, we visited the harbourmaster's office in order to be seen personally.

We covered the distance that day because, as already mentioned in another post, we would rather weather the rain and the thunderstorm a bit further inland. Furthermore, we'd never visited Heusden before and wanted to follow up some recommendations from our boating friends.

First we have to say that Heusden is a great little town. Taking the ship's dog for a walk, shopping in small craft shops and eating delicious food. Everything was great. Heusden's small harbour is the perfect place for these activities! However, overnight stays aren't allowed there. You can moor, stroll, get something to eat or let the ship's dog out without any problems.

Only the De Wiel marina made a less favourable impression.

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 82,1 km | Locks: 3 | Engine hours: 8 h

With a thunderstorm approaching, it was the perfect opportunity to send the drone aloft. Unfortunately I was a little bit inattentive and didn't launch the drone from the De Wiel marina but, as it turned out during



the landing, from private property. The owner was, rightly, not particularly pleased. But we were able to explain everything and an apology settled the matter.

Day 9:

We fitted in a scheduled day in port. A few impressions of the De Wiel marina in Heusden: For us, the old harbour (you pass under the white bascule bridge) had more charm than the new marina. This might be because you hardly see a thing by walking over the jetties, as the huge yachts have such a freeboard there that you can't see anything for the paint, stems and swimming platforms. There were some really nice yachts there, no question. From classic to ultramodern. How practical they would be on a cruise at over 20m in length, I can't say. There are few marinas that have transit jetties for yachts of this size.

The area around the marina was very well maintained. Weather permitting, we intended to take a tour of Heusden that day. If we got a smart card that worked. Unfortunately, the first two smart cards didn't let us back on to the jetty.

minutes. Calling ahead on VHF channel 22 posed no problems.

We were back at the berth almost to the day (2 July) that we visited on our glider yacht in 2015. It was great to be back.

The harbourmaster came round to collect the mooring fees in the evening. In De Gouden Ham electricity, toilets and showers are provided at the berths with jetties. We moored a little further forward because we didn't need electricity.

Our solar panels provide enough electricity even on cloudy days so we can be self-sufficient. For the ship's dog there's nothing better. Our berth had a view of the Meuse and De Gouden Ham. Perfect.

After mooring, we unpacked our e-scooters and drove once around De Gouden Ham and back to refresh our fond memories.

We made ourselves comfortable at this berth. We probably wouldn't be setting sail until Tuesday to make the last leg of the journey to our home port.



Prinses Maximasluis



De Gouden Ham

Day 10:

De Wiel marina, Heusden to De Gouden Ham marina, Maasbommel

We cast off from De Wiel marina in Heusden at 8:00. Our destination for the day was De Gouden Ham near Maasbommel. The trip covered 38 kilometres, including one lock. The weather was mixed until we moored at De Gouden Ham. It was dry, but windy and cloudy. We passed through the Prinses Maxima lock in 20

We took a look under the floorboards in the bilge again and sorted out a few minor issues ourselves. There was no engine oil in the bilge. The seawater filter was clean. Our small plastic bowl under the shaft stuffing box was two-thirds full. This is normal for the number of operating hours run. We tipped the water/grease mixture into a bottle, which we always have on board for "waste to be disposed of". The shaft also got another rotation from the grease reservoir. OK!

Maybe some information would help... we empty the

small plastic bowl (holds 150-180 ml) about every 40-50 operating hours.

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 38,1 km | Locks: 1 | Engine hours: 3,7 h

Day 11:

We stayed another day in Maasbommel. We liked it a lot there. An overnight stay costs €12 for boats up to 10 metres and €17 for boats over 10 metres.

Someone comes to collect at about 18:00 every evening. Payments are only possible by EC-Cash and entering a PIN code.

At the back, there are 125 more berths at jetties with electricity and showers are also available. No difference in price, but busier.

The nice thing about this berth was that you had a direct view of the Meuse and also of De Gouden Ham itself. Great.

The wind got up in the evening and was blowing at well over 50 km/h. We have positioned the mooring lines and fenders perfectly. No problems were therefore expected.

Other boats came and went throughout the day. We helped some with mooring and others with casting off. It's a point of honour.

Day 12:

We had spent the previous two days at the natural jetty in De Gouden Ham, Maasbommel. The lovely weather again meant that we could move on. We took our final daily stage at a very leisurely pace. It

took us only about two and a half hours to get from Maasbommel (kilometre 192 on the Meuse) to the entrance to 't Loo in Linden (kilometre 167), despite Grave lock.

We were lucky enough to be able to enter Grave lock with the inland vessel "Tamaris". In this way, we passed through the lock, a process which had taken us a good one and a half hours on the outward journey, in 18 minutes. It's not possible to give details of timings as far as locks are concerned. Once again, our "Grave example" very clearly shows why.

Statistics:

Distance travelled: 28 km | Locks: 1 | Engine hours: 2,5 h

Overall statistics

Distance travelled: 354,80 km

Locks: 10

Engine hours: 35,5 h

Total travel time: 39 hours, 14 minutes

More information:

www.ms-vitanova.de/2020/06/30/logbuch-grevelingermeer/

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