

# FROM AUXERRE TO MAASBRACHT FERRYING OUR “ABUELA”

Travel story by Oliver Trzaska.

8 April to 1 May 2022

Excited, Jan and I got into the packed car. Bedding, dishes, clothes, tools, spare parts - it was all there.



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Klaus, who'd actually intended to accompany us as an expert, had cancelled two days before because of a positive coronavirus test. Luckily, his friend Harald stepped in. So we could go after all. That was lucky, because without an expert, the project would have been doomed to failure. We picked up Harald in Cologne and it immediately became apparent that we had the right “chemistry”. We had

fun and interesting conversations on the long, rainy drive to Auxerre. By the time we arrived at the hotel, it was late in the evening. It was two beers in the hotel bar and off to bed. Tomorrow would be an exciting day.

## 09.04.22 | Handover and departure in Auxerre

We met up with Mike from Aquarelle at 9:30 am for a river trial and handover. Although the boat looked good, it did need some maintenance. Having become proud boat owners, we went on the hunt for a table for the aft deck, which the previous owner didn't think was necessary. Unfortunately, we didn't find one, but we did find a toaster, a vacuum cleaner and an oven. Once underway, Harald noticed that the cooling water was overheating and the exhaust was starting to smoke. We stopped at a lock and let Mike know. After a pleasant dinner, we spent our first night on board.



#### 10.04.22 | First forced break

Mike promised us a technician for the following morning. We used our time at the lock to practise with the drone. Jan had the idea of using the radar dish as a landing pad. So now we had a yacht with a helipad!

The weather was fantastic and we scoured the area looking for fresh baguettes. Yummy! By the time we reached the boat, for some inexplicable reason, our purchase was no longer complete ... hmm. In the evening, we cooked up a delicious meal and went to bed, tired out. We hoped the technician would arrive on time the next morning and solve the problem quickly. All in all, it had been an almost perfect day's holiday.

#### 11.04.22 | Bye bye, Harald

The technician did actually arrive on time at 9:15 am. Wow! After a few minutes, he showed me the impeller, which was perfectly fine. So the search continued. Twenty minutes later I was looking at shells, stones and sand that the technician had extracted from our heat exchanger. Now there was considerably more cooling water splashing out.

We continued our journey in good spirits – in fantastic weather. We really enjoyed our trip on the Yonne. There was a lot of flotsam in the locks. This often causes delays because the lock keepers have to clear it away from the gates before boats can pass through. In general, the state of the locks was, shall we say, rather "special". As an estate agent would say: The locks have character and a great view of the river.

We dropped Harald off at the railway station in Sens and, during a convivial evening on board, we looked forward to the "father-and-son tour" that would be starting the next day.



#### 12.04.22 | Two on board and a lesson on wind in locks

Breakfast was great, as was the weather. When we departed at 8 am, the lock had already been prepared for us. That was a good start!

And things were actually going very well. All the locks had been opened for us. The area was gorgeous and the riverbanks offered us a varied backdrop. The rape seed fields just looked great.

I did a full-load test, as we would also be having to cope with passes with countercurrents. I thought it would be good if we could run higher revs there for a while. But after only two minutes the water temperature shot up to well over 90°C. I sent Mike a video of the smoke and asked him to organise a technician.

In the very narrow section of canal near Vinneuf, a large freighter was heading straight for us. We stopped and Jan jumped off to tie up the Abuela, as I thought it was a bit too tight for it to get past.

The next lock proved to be a challenge. Jagged edges, a small jetty directly in front of the gate on the port side and gusty winds from port made manoeuvring difficult. Jan

went into the lock and did everything right, but I rejected the plan to moor with the stern line first, which would have been a sensible manoeuvre. I threw the line, but the wind caught the Abuela and turned it into the lock. Then I also gave Jan the wrong command, which confused him a bit, but he stayed calm and carried on. At the last second, I got a fender between us and the corner of the lock wall. Jan explained to me how foolish I'd been and we swapped places. I started to sort out my mistakes and gave the Abuela a little souvenir of the jetty. It was no longer worth mooring, we were already down.

We sailed into the Seine and found a small marina in Saint-Mammès. The search for a nice restaurant ended in disappointment so we bought a pizza via Lieferando, and took it on board. Mike called and told us a technician would be with us the next day. We ended the very eventful day in comfort and realised that we didn't even have a pack of cards with us ...

### 13.04.22 | Carlos or a lesson in "Savoir Vivre" ...

We cast off in light rain.

The lock keeper, who was presumably deaf and blind, consistently ignored us. It was only after a call to the control centre that we could finally pass through.

We arrived at the small marina where we had arranged to meet the technician.

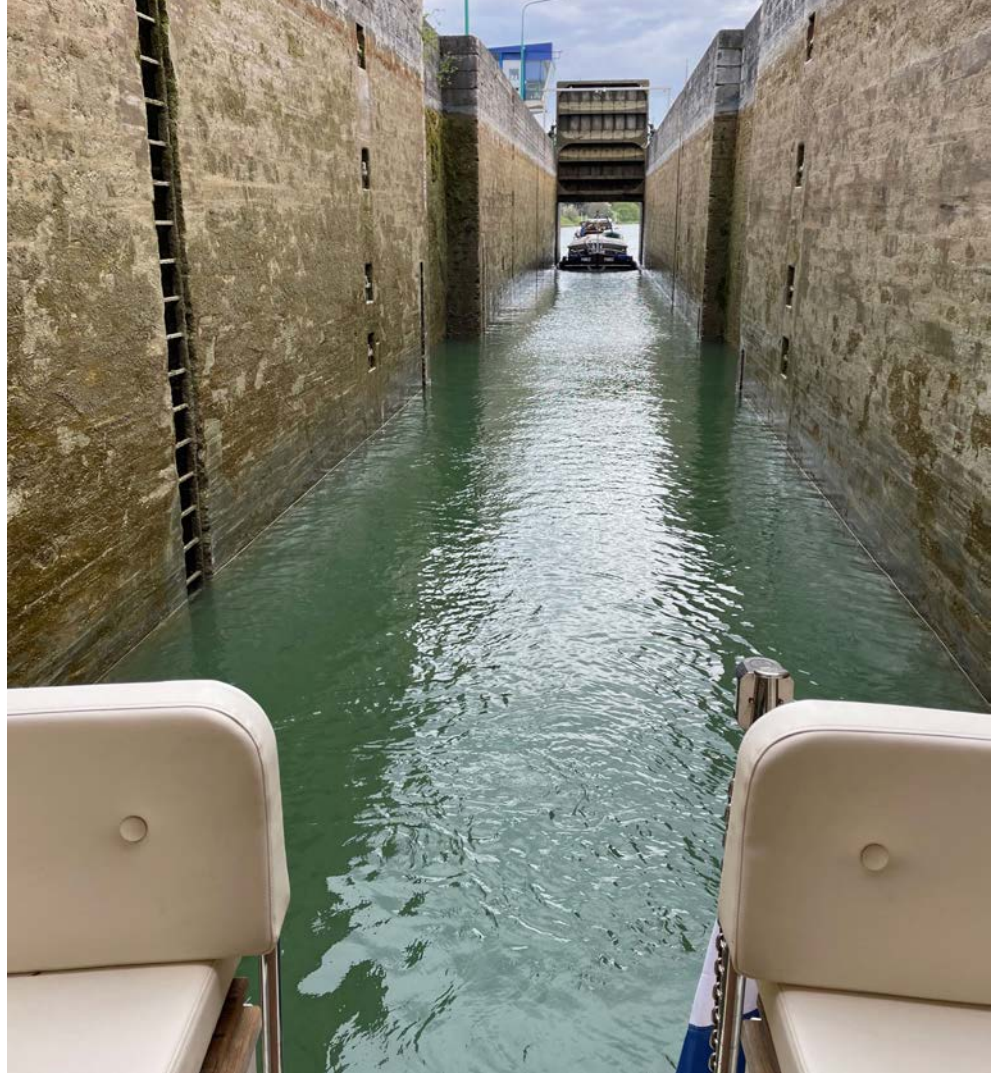
After an hour, the cooling circuit had been flushed and a seal replaced. Now there was much more water. We were happy. We set off and increased the revs to make up for the delay.

After three and a half hours at 1,850 rpm, we were unfortunately well above 90°C again. At 1,500 rpm, the temperature remained within the right range. We decided we would continue on our way and have this checked out at the boatyard in Maasbracht, and inform Mike.

That day's journey ended at Coudray. Funnily enough, it was exactly the same lock where we were originally supposed to spend the night on the 11th. As we were two days behind schedule, we decided to go through the first lock at 6 am.

### 14.04.22 | What a day!

Over the first coffee I realised that although the plan to go through the lock at 6 am gave us a time advantage, the sun was still asleep, unlike us. It was pitch black. From then on, I always checked what time sunrise would be before I made the plan for the next day. After the second coffee, I thought to myself that I ought to enjoy the situation. It was bitterly cold. A light fog blanketed the mirror-smooth water and the lights on the lock created an indescribable atmosphere. The powerful marine diesel engines of the commercial ships gave a muffled roar as they passed through the otherwise complete silence around us. Whimsically beautiful.



After coffee number 3 we cleaned the misted-up windows, radioed the lock and cast off the lines.

When the lock gates on the other side opened we were dumbstruck. We couldn't see our hand in front of our face! It was the densest fog ever. I decided to head for the starboard bank after the lock, directly in front of the weir. Fortunately, I was able to make out the trees on the bank and so knew where the river was. The large map plotter also helped a lot. Slowly the fog lifted and, after a very long 40 minutes, the spooky atmosphere had passed and the sun was smiling ... What an experience!

At this point, the Seine is a dreamy little river that sometimes even seems a little enchanted due to the truly magnificent old houses that line the river there, resembling miniature palaces. Almost all the houses had small private jetties, with a freighter or a houseboat moored between them from time to time.

The surrounding area was becoming more and more urban as the Seine flowed into the Paris suburbs. I didn't think much of the industrial hustle and bustle. But of course it's part of the scene.

We cruised past the mouth of the Marne. It was teeming with boats of all kinds, and the swell could measure up to what you face on the Mediterranean.

Suddenly, three rubber dinghies with policemen in full gear and armed with machine guns appeared in front of us. Blue lights and sirens everywhere. We didn't know what was going on all of a sudden. The crews of the RIBs obviously had great fun bobbing and weaving through the other boats at breakneck speed, leaping over the waves. But they took the time to give us a friendly wave.

I had difficulty identifying the entrance to the lock at Port de l'Arsenal. After five minutes, the tiny lock was opened and I was very proud of myself for



the confident and stress-free way I sailed into the lock through the swell and current. When we emerged from the lock, we were in another world. Crystal-clear, glassy water and what felt like 10,000 boats awaiting us. I spotted the harbourmaster's office and parked right in front of it. We were allowed to moor there. Cost: EUR 47 per night. For a mooring in the middle of Paris with a view of Notre Dame, it was a real bargain. And then we got started. Within five and a half hours we had completed a short tour of Paris. On foot, of course. Notre Dame was just around the corner. On the way to the Louvre there were incredibly good croissants to be had, and one metro stop past the Louvre we visited the Place de la Concorde, took a photo on the Champs-Élysées with the Arc de Triomphe in the background and then of course stopped by the Eiffel Tower. As my back was clearly complaining after all that walking, I negotiated a fare for a ride to the Eiffel Tower with the driver of a cycle rickshaw. Once there, staying calm (after taking a deep breath), I managed to talk him out of the idea that the agreed fare had been per person.

Then it was back along the Seine to the marina. We were dead tired. We knew it was a mistake, but we were

really too weary to cast off again and sail the Seine in the dark. We fell asleep in a stupor.

#### 15.04.22 | The Marne

There was an excellent bakery on Rue de Bercy where I loaded up for a breakfast fit for a king and picked up a few baguettes for the road. We then set off in the direction of Meaux. In St. Maur we passed through a tunnel for the first time on our journey. That was quite exciting. Everything went quite smoothly and we very much enjoyed the cruise along the beautiful and varied Marne. The landscape was magnificent, even "chocolate-box" beautiful in places, and the fact that we were so close to nature was very impressive.

In the evening – thanks to a much shortened stay in Paris – we were exactly on schedule and in front of exactly the same lock that had been planned for that day: Lock No. 14, Chalifert, just before the second tunnel of the journey. We took some beautiful sunset snapshots and tried out the drone a bit more.

#### 16.04.22 | "No Pilot"

After a hearty breakfast, we cast off and radioed the lock. Nothing. No response. We called the lock, but no one picked up. I learned a lesson from

this: first contact the lock, and then cast off. We hung about in front of the lock for another 15 minutes, when suddenly a radio announcement told us that the lock was out of order, but they were working on it. So we moored again. After a long 40 minutes, the lock gate opened and we passed through. We folded down the canopy in the small basin in front of the lock and sailed into the tunnel. But we had a much bigger clearance than expected and so we didn't actually need to fold down the canopy.

Unfortunately, when we started the engine in front of the lock, the rudder level indicator stuck. I hoped it would recover. It is very helpful in the locks and in the marina as well. Sure, you can manage without it, but it's much easier with it.

The tunnel was followed by a long, narrow channel, which ended in Meaux. Since Meaux had a small marina and, according to Google Maps, there were some shopping facilities nearby, we decided to replenish our supplies. Our little trolley was groaning under the weight of our shopping as we discussed the cast-off manoeuvre Jan wanted to do on the way back. So we pivoted the boat around the forward spring line and it was a textbook operation. Unfortunately, Jan was a little too hesitant when reversing, which is why we aborted the manoeuvre and bumped into the jetty again. I used a different cleat on the jetty for the spring line and everything worked perfectly at the next attempt. The landscape was an absolute dream. Sometimes you would think you were sailing down the Amazon ...

Due to our shopping trip, we didn't quite make that day's stage, although we sailed until sunset. At Lock No. 10, St. Jean, it was knocking-off time for the day. I did a quick count of the locks we'd passed so far. There were actually 44. It didn't seem like that at all.

**17.04.22 | Second forced break**

The next morning I was at the helm at 8 am with a coffee in my hand, radioing the lock. Without casting off first, of course ...

Nothing was happening! I called the phone number of the lock and got the following response: "Non, non, monsieur ...tout le jour fermé ...". Excuse me?! That's right, the locks on the Marne were unfortunately closed over the Easter holidays. There was nothing we could do. The forced break gave us time to clean the boat. I grabbed a bucket, sponge, rag and cleaning product and dealt with those strange worms on the paint that leave a yellow smear when removed if you're not thorough enough. There is something meditative about it all.

In the late afternoon we got an unexpected visit from the lock keeper, who stopped by on her walk with her dog. She said she would open the lock for us early the next morning, but didn't believe that the following locks would do the same. Well, that was at least something. So the next day we could sail at a leisurely pace as far as Lock No. 9.



**18.04.22 | Easter Monday on the Marne**

The next morning at 9 am it was time to cast off. The lock did actually open, but we received confirmation that all the other locks on the route would remain closed. We sailed slowly and at a leisurely pace to the next lock, enjoying that fantastic stretch of the Marne.

After mooring in front of Couraton lock, we relaxed on deck. The weather was sensational. Then I couldn't stand it any longer and reached for the windscreen cleaner. The work had to go on, because everything had to be bright and shiny for when the girls came. Jan was a bit more relaxed and

coped very well with the thought of doing nothing .

**19.04.22 | Tiny change of plans**

At 8 am sharp, I sent a radio message to the lock. A minute later I pressed the remote control and the lock emptied. Super!

We wanted to make up time so that we could pick up the girls as close to Reims as possible. After the second lock we had almost no countercurrent and therefore made good progress. The engine remained in the green zone.

At Damery lock, the lock keeper approached us and explained that he was of course very happy to let us



through the lock, but that we should know that we couldn't go further than Bisseuil. The canal had been drained in the morning to allow repairs to be carried out. We could wait until 9 June or go back to Paris.

We were happy he told us! We had actually wanted to be there two days earlier, when we would still have got through.

We said thank you – it wasn't the lock keeper's fault – sailed through the lock and moored in Damery to wait for the girls. We were, admittedly, slightly frustrated. We had made very good progress despite the delay due to the mechanical problems, had turbo geared in Paris and were back on schedule. Due to the stupid break over the Easter holidays, we were now two days behind. And now this too! We wanted to restore our good mood by having a good meal in a restaurant. Unfortunately, we were not allowed this pleasure either, because – contrary to what was stated on the internet – all the restaurants in the vicinity were closed. So we had noodles.

The advantage of the new situation, however, was that my girls could sail the beautiful Marne with us once more, and Lena could finally see Paris. She had very much wanted that.

#### **20.04.22 | Nati and Lena arrive**

Since Nati and Lena had said they would be arriving at 10 am, we scheduled our breakfast for 9 am. Jan got us fresh croissants and baguettes.

When the two girls arrived, the frustration was as good as forgotten. We were looking forward to the next few days and the beautiful route that now lay ahead of us. We filled up the water tank and cast off. Now that we were sailing with the current, we were really excited to be able to cover the distance to Paris within two days. The ladies first got a refresher course in how to negotiate locks and were happy to take over the helm from time to time.

We made excellent progress. We managed to get back to Lock No. 8, Méry-sur-Marne, in about nine hours. That raised our hopes that we would make it back to Paris the next day.

#### **21.04.22 | Off to Paris**

With excellent weather and in fantastic light conditions, we passed through the first lock at 7:30 am. The Marne looked really beautiful. In La Ferté-sous-Jouarre I suddenly spotted an Aldi store right next to the river. This was a good opportunity to stop at the jetty in front of the store and do some shopping. Women have different nutritional requirements

than men. We were happy about our good "Aldi parking space" and the fact that we lost very little time.

We ended our day at Lock 16, Neuilly. We arrived there at 7:15 pm and I prepared myself, somewhat grimly, for the prospect of spending the night under lime trees – which would probably earn me another cleaning day. When mooring, I noticed that a VNF (French navigation authority) vessel was parked directly in front of the lock. Jan spontaneously offered to run to the front and ask what was happening. After five minutes, he returned to the boat with a wide grin and two thumbs up. The lock keeper was kind enough to let us through. Paris, here we come. The next lock was open until 8:30 pm and we thought we should make it.

We were considering spending the night in the Arsenal marina. However, the lock keeper told us that we would make it through one lock, but no way would we get through the other lock in time. And we should definitely not go through the lock to spend the night somewhere around there, because strange people lived there. Of course we took the warning seriously, sailed through the tunnel and moored directly in front of the lock in order to pass through it on time the next morning.

**22.04.22 | Paris the Second**

We passed through the first lock, completely alone. Everything went like clockwork and we entered the Seine from the Marne.

Jan and I were very surprised. The river showed us a completely different side. On our outward journey, we had encountered an unbelievable amount of traffic, high waves, a mix of different types of boats including three RIBs with blue lights and an armed special task force, but now we were completely alone and the Seine was as smooth as glass.

We had Paris to ourselves. Unlike the tourist boats, which obviously wanted to cover seven sights in six minutes, I picked up speed and we glided pleasurably through old Paris. What a great feeling.

Once we left Paris behind, the Seine became a really wide river. For the first time, I was grateful to have the autopilot. Very pleasant! We turned right into the Oise and, not for the first time, we thought it was a pity that we were doing a ferrying operation and weren't on holiday and

therefore didn't have time to just stop somewhere for a moment and enjoy beautiful places

That day we made good time and got as far as Lock 4, Creil.

**23.04.22 | Advanced Locks**

We sailed up the Oise with little countercurrent. In Compiègne, I decided to take the Canal du Nord due to time constraints. I had not prepared the route and expected probability of further surprises for this canal to be very remote as it had comparatively few locks. I would have liked to turn off towards Reims to get back on the route we originally planned, but that would have taken us two more days for sure.

The first locks on the Canal du Nord were very exciting because they are high and narrow. Our Linssen is not exactly small, but you still feel like you're being flushed down the toilet. Fortunately, we were now lock professionals and had enough people on board to be able to moor properly at two points despite the lack of options. Jan sailed through the third

lock of this kind and was justifiably very proud of how well it went.

Today we reached Epenancout and mentally braced ourselves for the fact that the ladies and my son would be disembarking and my brother would be arriving instead.

**24.04.22 | Shift change and a surprise in the tunnel!**

We made excellent progress the next morning, reached Lock 10 at the exact time we calculated in advance and waited for my brother. After a few minutes, he actually arrived at the lock to a big welcome.

We proudly reported on our experiences and prepared him for the somewhat rough lock climate in the canal. However, it is questionable whether smugly saying "If you can do locks here, you can do them anywhere" would reassure a complete lock novice. And there's no getting away from it: Jan and Lena gave a quick course on how to use the cleats, adjust the fenders and, of course, negotiate the locks. Thomas was a fast learner and, despite the professional stress from which he travelled to us to escape, kept very calm and let everything wash over him. It certainly took a few days before he realised that the slow progress was not a disadvantage and it no longer bothered him. To calm himself down, he had brought half his office with him in two gigantic trunks. With a heavy heart, my wife left the boat with the children, as school would be starting again for everyone the following day.

Ahead of us lay the Ruyaulcourt tunnel, 4,354 metres long. Wow! Feeling a bit anxious, I complied with the instruction to reel in the fenders. We sailed into the tunnel when the light turned green.



This tunnel is very narrow at the beginning and I thought it could be exhausting over four kilometres. But, after a while, the lighting improved and the tunnel doubled in width. At some point in the distance, I could see that the tunnel would become narrower again, and I wondered why the lighting in the narrower section of the tunnel at the back was getting so much worse. Suddenly, I heard my brother ask: "You saw that red light?" I answered: "What red light? We're in a tunnel ..."

All of a sudden, a huge, black wall pushed out of the hole in front of us heading straight for us. Now I understood the reason for the weak lighting. Performing a turbo manoeuvre, I stopped and we tied up at the centre cleat on one of the bollards to starboard, the purpose of which I had previously questioned. Not any more. The pull wasn't as bad as I feared because the freighter was empty. But that made it seem all the more powerful. Feeling rather weak at the knees, we set off and continued towards the end of the tunnel. For my brother, the first hours on board were an eventful introduction to boating. The day was rounded off with a picture-perfect sunset at our overnight berth in front of Lock No. 7, Graincourt-lès-Havrincourt.

### 25.04.22 | Shopping spree

At 6:30 am we cast off.

Ten locks later we were in the small town of Valenciennes and I moored in a small marina very close to the lock. The harbourmaster said we could also moor there overnight. We wanted to go out and buy a few things. But that wasn't so easy – especially since in France the existence of languages other than French is ignored at best and my school French urgently needs to go in for repairs.

Loaded up with three large shopping bags, we sat in the taxi heading for the

marina, wanting to reward ourselves with a meal in a nice restaurant. But it was not to be: We "dined" at McDonalds, which reminded me again why I don't like going there. Dead tired, we went to bed.

### 26.04.22 | Up to lofty heights

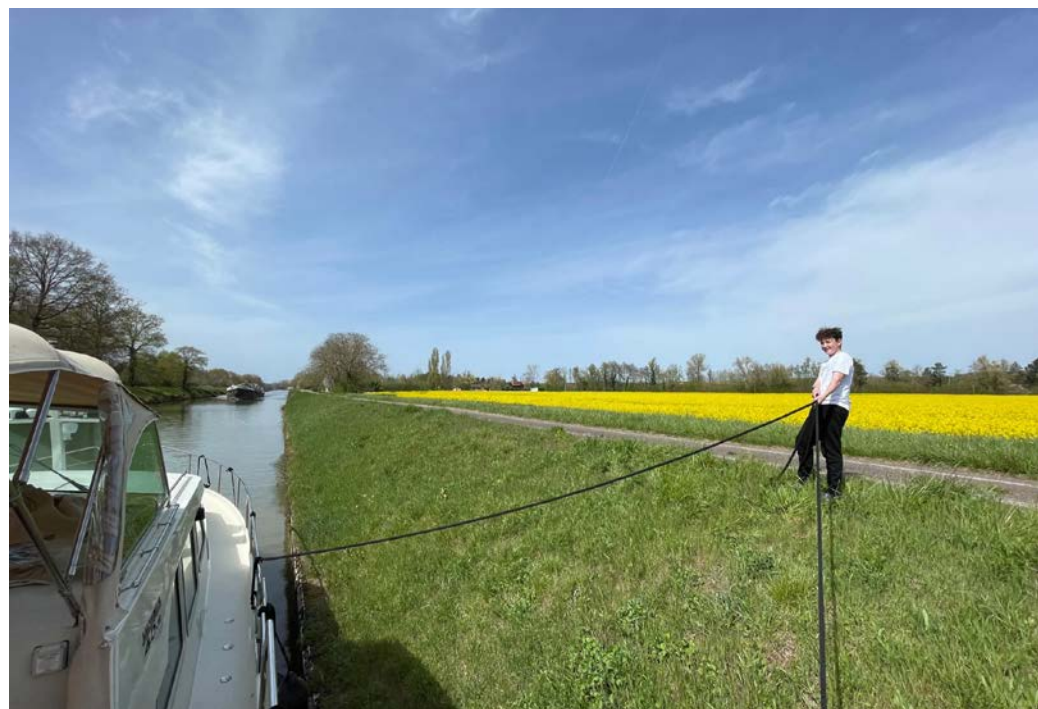
We treated ourselves to a good breakfast and a slightly more civilised departure time, as we wouldn't reach the lock at Mons before closing time anyway. At 11:30 am, we crossed the border into Belgium. We were full of hope that the Belgians would provide information in languages other than French and that perhaps even one or two lock-keepers had learned English at school. Our disappointment was great when we realised that this was obviously not the case. On the contrary: Whereas in France I understood at least half of what was said – and the important half – in Belgium I somehow only understood a quarter, and I'm not even sure if it was the important quarter.

We then had to experience the fact that this linguistic ignorance was not

conducive to the operational safety of the locks. At Obourg-Warton lock, both my brother and I understood that we were supposed to enter the lock BEFORE the commercial boat. But a loud and muffled sound from behind made it clear to us that the professional skipper obviously disagreed.

We were already almost in the lock and he was determinedly heading towards us. Full power astern, with the rudder fully turned and continuous thrust on the bow thruster, I just managed to escape the situation. Thomas immediately threw the line around a bollard at the middle cleat, which probably saved us. The pull was enormous. We were the plaything of physics. I wonder if a more experienced skipper would have simply entered the lock. That would certainly have been less dangerous. And we didn't understand the cursing and swearing of the professional boatman anyway.

As we were making excellent progress, we decided to go through the lock in Mons after all and dock





only at sunset. To our great surprise, we realised that the lock after the lock at Mons was not a lock at all, but a huge boat lift with a height difference of 71 metres.

What a highlight. It was incredibly fascinating to be hosted 70 metres in a huge "bathtub". Unfortunately, I didn't trust myself to launch the drone. In fading daylight we reached a small harbour near Seneffe.

**27.04.22 | First ugly, then beautiful...**

At 8 am sharp, it was once again time to cast off. The light conditions were fantastic. The water was blanketed by fog, the river was as smooth as glass and some birds provided us with the background music to our exit from the harbour.

We joined the river Sambre in Charleroi. The city is so ugly that it's almost beautiful. Some of the industrial buildings looked so menacing, they could have been the headquarters of a villain in a Bond film. Thomas was totally fascinated and took lots of photos. I though the Marne was more photogenic, but OK. Shortly after the lock, we moored to port on the lovingly and tastefully concrete-lined bank of the Sambre to replenish our supplies of water and pasta (Tricolore) at Lidl.

The small town of Namur reconciled me a little to our improvised route. And then we were finally on the Meuse. In a charming marina in front of spectacular rock formations, two colourfully dressed and somewhat crazy Frenchmen gave us to understand, using sign language, that they wanted to help us moor. The cleat on the jetty was secured in a quite frantic way, with a guaranteed non-textbook tangle of loops. Nevertheless, they did provide support. They were really funny and very nice. It seems that humour can be translated into French, Spanish, German and English by means of sign language. We learned that they wanted to sail to Marseille on their rather small, 40-year-old boat. Wow, that was brave. I felt like a spoiled brat with all the luxuries – on my 40-foot Linszen with huge water tank, massive inverter, autopilot, two toilets, two showers and all the other bells and whistles.



## 28.04.22 | Maastricht

We were rather exhausted and therefore decided to leave at "only" 8 am.

The next morning, as we cast off, we met the two good-humoured Frenchmen, who obviously also want to leave. I turned to climb the ladder, and as I walked to the helm, the boat belonging to the two – who had been standing next to me on the jetty only seconds before – was already passing us with a clatter. I started the engine, snorting, and had to check the rev counter to make sure it was really running. Oh dear, I could only wish them both good luck and a safe journey ....

We continued downstream, heading for Liège. The locks on the Meuse were a completely different kettle of fish from all the previous ones. Almost "locks for beginners". And I heard my brother say a sentence he would never have said a week before: "I love floating bollards!" I was very proud of him ...

Apart from a few beautiful homes along the riverbank, Liège did not strike us as particularly attractive. Things did improve a little as we passed beautiful castle gardens and the riverbank lined with crowds of people enjoying the good weather.

Shortly afterwards, we encountered the "Swan", a member of the Linssen family. The first other Linssen we had met on our journey so far. We greeted each other with eager waves.

We passed the earnest but friendly-looking statue of King Albert I and entered the canal named after him in the direction of Maastricht.

At around 9:20 pm, we reached Maastricht old town in the fading daylight. Maurice had tipped us off that we should moor at the wall in front of the old bridge. That was a good tip. A young couple on a small sailing boat – who also wanted to go

to Marseille – kindly moved their boat a bit to the side to make room for us as well.

Somewhat wistfully, I realised that this was the last night of our ferrying trip. The three weeks on the boat felt more like three months. I had experienced that much. I was sad, but also happy that I had been able to enjoy these many experiences and this great journey. I thought it would probably take me a week to get used to living on land again.

We went to a "proper" restaurant and enjoyed our last evening on the tour. As it was a comparatively short leg from there to our home port, Van der Laan in Maasbracht, and we weren't expecting our welcoming committee – Thomas' family – until around 3 pm, we decided to have a leisurely breakfast at 9 am.

## 29.04.22 | The last day

I went to the bakery and, somewhat naively, I got some croissants. Well, the French may not have been able to speak English, but they could bake croissants.

We set off on time and this last leg went like clockwork. I was a bit excited to be sailing under my own steam in the place where I'd already done short "test runs" with Maurice

so many times and also practised operating locks and mooring during skipper training. And I was looking forward to entering, for the first time, "our box" in the marina.

We pulled in at Van der Laan on time and checked in. Now we'd actually arrived – exactly three weeks after I got into the car to drive to Auxerre.

All that was left to say was: "That's it!" I was really sad. One last photo with the luggage cart and the setting sun and we got into the car. Bye, my little Abuelita. I found the three weeks with you incredibly beautiful and miss you already. But we'll see you again on Friday for cleaning. Or on Thursday, or on Wednesday ... Sigh, that was nice! ◆

## TRAVEL INFO:

**Yacht type** Linssen Grand Sturdy 40.9 AC, year of construction 2010.

**Engine** 1 x Volvo Penta D3-110 (110 hp)

**Distance** approx. 1,152 kilometres travelled

**Fuel** 762 litres of diesel

**Sailing hours** 174 hours' sailing

**Locks** 145

**Duration** 21 days, 1 fantastic experience..