



7. Portugal 2012



by Johan Kjellander 2012 - 2014



It was now mid August and we were beginning to approach the end of this years journey. We left Bayona in Spain, crossed the border to Portugal and stopped in Povo de Varzim where we would leave the boat for the winter. In Povo de Varzim we met sailors from many different countries.

Povo de Varzim



We happened to arrive in Povo de Varzim at the same time as the Catholic celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption. For this reason the church in the harbour was all dressed in electric light outside and flowers inside.



The main street was also dressed in fresh flowers. Fantastic creations.



In the after noon a procession left the church and marched through the flower covered streets. Young girls were dressed as Virgin Mary.



There were many different Mary's. So many people involved in the celebration, young and old, in a relatively small town.



Finally the men came carrying big heavy wooden statues also covered in fresh flowers. A fantastic celebration. There is nothing even close to this in Sweden.



Just like me, a lot of other sailors stay for some time in Povia de Varzim or leave their boat here for the winter. I spent 5 weeks here before I returned to Sweden and during that time I met a lot of lovely people. Here are some of them...

Sunday evenings a barbecue was arranged for all the sailors. English, German, French, Swedish, Danish and so on. Lots of nationalities, all with interesting stories to tell.



I had a very interesting discussion about solar panels with the German couple to the left. He had panels of different quality and was testing them to see if expensive panels gave more electricity or not.

A Danish viking on his way to the Caribbean in the middle and an American sailor discussing sailing routes with an Austrian sailor to the right.



Brian surrounded by two lovely sailors. He came to Povoá de Varzim seven years ago for fuel but stranded here. He lives in his catamaran and has taken a big responsibility for the well being of other sailors. He arranges the barbecue each week but also a weekly restaurant evening and a trip to the supermarket with minibus. Brian is the best ! Another English catamaran enthusiast in the middle and a German couple with a very nice steel boat that they built themselves to the right.



One day a Swedish boat named Balance arrived. It was Staffan and Kerstin that we met for the first time in Ireland but also in Coruna in Spain. Meeting again is always fun.



The animal life in the harbour is rich. A lot of mullet in the water and a lot of dogs on land. Four dogs to be exact, one with only three legs though. They live in a workshop and are fed by the marina staff with food payed by the sailors on a voluntary basis.



Povoa de Varzim is also a traditional fishing port. When needed, the boats are hauled up on this old slipway for painting and repair. Very traditional wooden boats and very traditional methods.



Here is one of the sledges used to haul the boats out of the water.



The very long pier, and on the other side a fantastic beach. Miles of sand and big atlantic waves rolling in. Surfing is popular here.



A newly built church close to the water. The architecture is said to be inspired by the shape of a sailingship.



The bullfighting arena. Portuguese bullfighting is dangerous, not for the bull but for the people in the ring. No weapons are allowed, 8 men fight the bull with there bare hands. If they can pull the bull down on the ground, they win. I wouldn't want to meet a bull like this with my bare hands. There are many nice monuments in Povoá de Varzim.



Here is one with pictures of important events from local history. A violent storm killed many fishermen 1892. The right image shows how women ran down to the beach but could only watch their men die in the waves. Many fishing villages have similar stories to tell.



Another nice bronze monument with a public motive. No kings on horses here !



And that was the end of the sailing season for Bird of Passage 2012. The travel lift took her up and placed her securely on the concrete to rest until next spring.

She left Dover in April, sailed through the Caledonian canal, stopped in Ireland and Isle of Man, crossed the Biscay and now after 2000 nautical miles she is in Portugal and it's September. By bye, Tove and I hope to see you for a couple of weeks during Christmas.



The end of 2012

