



7. Atlantic Ocean 2020

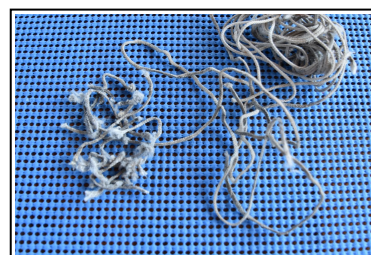


by Johan Kjellander 2020



We arrived to Gibraltar early in the morning but we had seen the famous rock coming closer and closer during the night. To the right in the picture above there are two very bright shining structures. First I could not understand what this was but then I remembered I had seen something similar on the Canary Islands several years ago. They are ships with a drilling tower in the middle, used in the oil industry. The picture is unsharp because of long exposure time and moving boat but still pretty good I think taking into account that I used a 300 mm lens and there was no daylight.

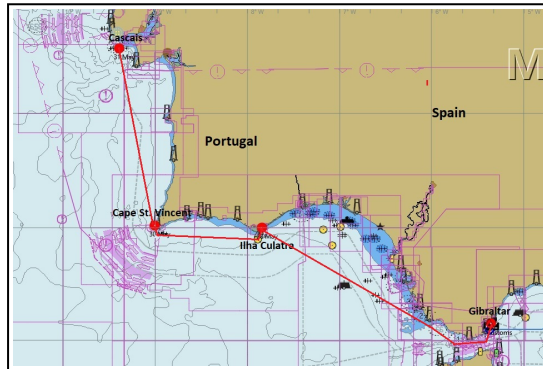
The right picture was taken 12 hours later as we left Gibraltar and sailed into the Atlantic Ocean. This was the third time I passed through the strait of Gibraltar on my own boat. The Logbooks from 1986 and 1998 have more information about this magic place.



From Gibraltar we had very strong wind from behind all day. 30 knots (15 m/s) average and up to 40 knots short periods of time. In winds like that Bird of Passage does 9-10 knots and sometimes more. Late afternoon the wind ceased to moderate 20 knots and life became a little more relaxed on board.

The next day we had good sailing almost all the way up to the Algarve coast of Portugal. A few hours of motoring by the end of the day and we could anchor on the north side of Culatra Island. We hoped we would be able to

get some food there and also needed to service the reefing system of the main sail. Nothing damaged but a thin pilot line had found its way to a place where it should not be. See the mid picture above.



We were getting low on food. No fruit, no bread, no fresh vegetables. Only dryfood, so I asked the Maritime Police in Culatra on the radio if they could help us. They gave me a telephone number to a local shop and I phoned. Yes, he would be able to help us. Send me your shopping list by e-mail, he said. Ok, what is your e-mail adress, I replied. He sent it as a text message but the message was unreadable. I phoned him again and asked him to spell the adress on the phone but it seemed that he could not spell in English. Then he asked his wife and she said the adress was wrong so he gave me a new adress, and so on. It took several hours just to get the adress right so I could send him the shopping list. I asked him if he could fix this the next day and if we could pay by card and he said yes.

We were worried about staying too long because the weather forecast promised strong northerly wind and we wanted to be in Cascais by that time. So, when I didn't hear anything from him by noon the next day, I called him again and then he said I would have to wait one more day. Not possible because of the weather situation I said, we have to leave today. You promised to deliver today, remember? Apparently he did not remember anything so we had to leave without any food.



We left the Algarve coast by motor, rounded the magnificent cape of Saint Vincet and turned north.

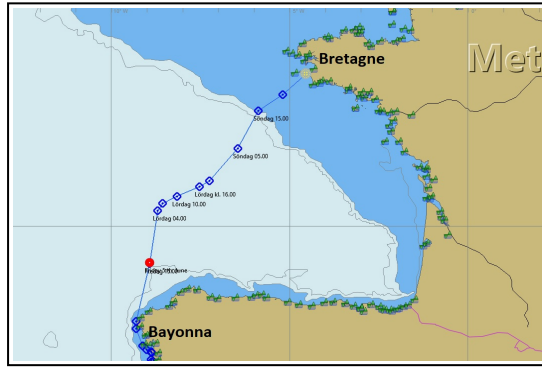
Two days later after burning a lot of diesel we arrived to Cascais. Once again I talked to the Maritime Police and they had to contact the Port Authority to give me permission to go to the marina fuel dock the next day. I told them we needed food and they gave me a telephone number to a company that charged 275€ for delivering food to the boat. Too much for our budget. I called the Maritime Police again and reminded them on the fact that we had been 40 days at sea, had no fresh food and a 12 year old girl on board. They could not help me.

We did get help though, by fellow sailors. First a motorboat came out from the marina and handed us two bags of bread and sardines, no charge. Then somebody called us on the VHF and offered to go shopping for us. He could deliver to the boat while we were filling diesel at the fuel dock. Perfect. The next day he handed over some 10 bags of food and now we were ready to continue north.



Seven years ago we sailed in these waters on our way south and now we had crossed that track. We had sailed around the world. I posted this picture on Face Book and soon had more than 250 likes and over 100 comments with congratulations.

We continued motoring up along the coast 220 NM to Bayonna in Spain. Here we made a stop for the night and managed to get diesel and water without any problems with the authorities. I called the marina on the phone and they said we were welcome to the fuel dock at once if we wanted to, but not to go ashore. We had now been on the boat for 45 days. I filled 170 liters of diesel which makes 0.8 l/NM which is good I think, for a 20 ton boat. Only using one engine on low speed doing about 4-5 knots, sometimes with a little help from a sail. Bird of Passage in economy mode!



From Bayonna we continued north along the coast all day and night, past Cape Finistere and out on the Biscay. We could now sail north in quite strong wind from the north east. The next day the wind turned to true north and we had to alter our course to north east. Not good but still better than motoring. On the morning of the fourth day, 450 NM from Bayonna, we took a mooring in the harbour of Audierne south of Brest.



Andrei had the last night watch and when he left over to me at 04.00 he told me there had been very hard wind for a while and the foresail was damaged.



We took the sail inside and 6 quick and willing hands (Tove, Katarina and Marta) immediately started working on it. The next day all the damages were repaired and we could try it on to see how it worked. It was perfect.

This sail was new 2011 when we left Sweden and has been our only foresail for approximately 30.000 NM. Now is the first time it needed service. Not

bad. Made by Swedish sailmaker Boding. Cloth is extra heavy Bainbridge Dacron.



We were now in Bretagne. First time for me and I immediately noticed the nice houses built in similar colors and styles. Gives a solid impression of order that attracts an engineering mind like me.



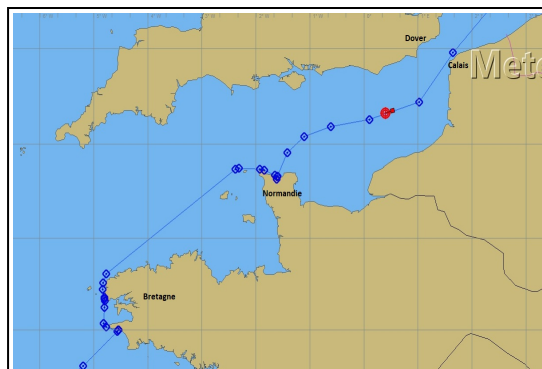
The north Atlantic coast is full of wonderful lighthouses. Sometimes built in unbelievably difficult places. The three above we passed in only a few hours on our way from Audierne to Cherbourg.



We also passed Alderney which is one of the British Channel Islands. Very strong tidal currents here. The "Alderney race" is legendary with speeds up to 7 knots. Here I also found this rock with a big colony of white birds (Seagulls?).



And so we arrived to Cherbourg and now we were finally allowed ashore after 54 days at sea with only a few short stops to get diesel, water and food delivered to the boat. The marina in Cherbourg is really big. Their website says 1600 boats. Lots of chandleries and now I could also get some of the spare parts that I needed for the boat.



The weather forecast opened up a window for continuing towards Calais so we left after two days of rest and replacing 3 different electric pumps that were broken. One toilet macerator pump, one drain pump and one bilge pump. Electric pumps are really weak spots on cruising boats I think.



We had to stay in Calais four nights before the weather was suitable to continue. No big deal and we had time for shopping and boat service. The outlet hose to the forward toilet needed replacement and in the chandlery in Calais I found a nice 38 mm white hose 11 meters long. Now the forward toilet was in good condition again. Friday the 16:th of June we left Calais to cross the North Sea, 400 NM.



Read about the North Sea in the next Log Book.



End of Atlantic Ocean 2020

