

**3rd Report: Grip**  
**63°13.1'N 07°35.6'E**  
**Nordskot**  
**67°50.2'N 14°47.7'E**  
**July 16 to August 2**

## Route Overview



**Tuesday, July 16.** Departure from Grip.

Our neighbors, Vigdis and Jørn on the X-Yacht make room for us; we cast off without problems in the little space there is.

At the end of the pier each tire hosts a nesting pair of seagulls. The residents have built in small wooden shelves I assume they prefer the birds to raise their young here instead of on the roofs of the houses.



Dozens of pairs breed here; some young ones are still with their parents; others have left the nest and learn to take care of themselves.

Out on the open water we say goodbye to the island under the cloudy sky with its line of colorful houses.

The weather is not great, but no rain for the moment and we are grateful for that. Mike takes his place in lookout position, comfortable seat on the dinghy, perfect view, peace and quiet for all kinds of thoughts.



After about two hours, we reach the rocky maze west of the island of Smøla. The picture could frighten the onlooker,



but on location the passages are in no way as narrow as they appear on the chart and they are very well marked.

The engine is running; rain is falling occasionally.

Many small islands are mostly uninhabited, but once in a while we see houses, nowadays probably summer residences. We assume that tiny fishing villages occupied some of those islands. Behind this one the immense expanse of the North Atlantic begins, nothing but water until Iceland, rich fishing grounds. The wind and cold that the people had to endure in such places; unimaginable.



After the rocky maze and the north coast of Smøla we pass several fish farms. We



talk a lot about the sense and nonsense of fish farming. There is no unambiguous conclusion. The matter is disconcertingly two-sided, we must concede. Fish farms also arouse our curiosity: How are the eggs gained and where hatched? At what age do the young fish arrive in

these basins? What happens, when a service ship arrives? With the binoculars and many wild guesses, we try to get a picture.

And the work on the fishing ships is exciting to watch. This one's holds are full; he is sorting the catch and must decide what he can or may bring to shore. The large flock of seagulls testifies the "surplus" in the water!

The birds are incredibly clever. As soon as our fishing rod is on board and one of us is fishing, first one bird arrives from nowhere, then the next one arrives until a few fly or swim around the boat. Do they see that far? And



how do they communicate? If no fish is caught after a while, they disappear obviously looking for more yielding feeding places.

In the early afternoon we reach the island of Hitra and stop in Kvenvær to shop, to fill the water tank and to indulge in coffee and cake before we leave and head for the anchoring place. Alex has planned a favorable area. The first little bay is too narrow, but in the next one we find a perfect spot, not too deep and at a good distance from the shore to be safe if the wind changes overnight.

The new anchor goes down for the first time, is solidly set and we enjoy an anchor beer and a wonderful evening all alone in the peaceful bay.



**Wednesday, July 17.** As we wake up and look around, *Silmaril* gently sways at anchor in the same spot as last night. The new anchor has acquitted itself perfectly, although the ground must be overgrown with dense seaweed. As we hoist the anchor, a



huge package of large-leaved stuff comes up first. Alex and Mike have the hardest time to free the anchor. We leave late, wind and rain are forecast.

Hitra is a large island and economically important. Long ago whaling stations ensured work and income. Today Hitra provides significant revenues with its salmon farming and crab processing.

We pass the sure signs of the island's wealth, fish farms, one after the other,

obviously rich communities sporting new or costly refurbished premises, homes that must have affluent owners, old boathouses now comfortable residences with landings for more than one motor boat, new boathouses for luxury villas hidden among the rocks or right on the shore.



Some of them show styles of famous architects.

Not all of them are in good taste, at least not in our eyes, but all of them must be very expensive.

Toward evening we reach our next desti-



nation: Knarrlagsund, a narrow waterway between the islands Ulvøya und Fjellværsøya in the northeast of Hitra.

We head for the outer jetty, the only guest place according to our book, although it is exposed to the wind from abeam. The maneuver is not easy, but with our combined efforts and some extra time we succeed without debacle.

To conclude a short but somewhat difficult day weatherwise, contrary wind, hazy visibility, we treat ourselves to fine food on the terrace of the restaurant with the three gables.



The wind has died down completely and *Silmaril* lies peacefully and alone at the guest jetty. A calm night is expecting us.

**Thursday, July 18.** We get up at 06:00. Bessaker, our next destination, is about 52nm distant; we will be on the water for 10 hours at least.

Mike takes the helm and we are on the way out of the sound the way we came in. Not a ripple on the water, the shore is reflected on the oily surface.



The wind freshens, the sky displays the most marvelous cloud pictures. Getting up early has its consequences: the crew needs a rest!



I'm at the helm. Far away I see what seems to be a funny light-brown tower; I see nothing corresponding on the plotter.



As we get closer the tower changes into a picture-book boat from Viking times. It glides by ghost-like without a sound; a majestic eerie picture.



I watch it for a long time and ponder Viking times when they conquered a good part of the world by land and by sea. These open boats carried their ingenious navigators and ship builders along the coasts of Europe, across the North Sea to Iceland and even across the North Atlantic to Newfoundland to find new living space more than a thousand years ago.

They raided and plundered, killed and enslaved and made themselves a name as brutal berserkers. But they also traveled on land as far as Russia to trade.

The Vikings fascinate me and I intend to go to my book on Viking history I have onboard and read up on details I have forgotten.

Around 17:30 we arrive in Bessaker. All the jetties are occupied. Only one spot at the diesel pontoon is long enough for *Silmaril*. The attendant objects at first, but agrees to let us stay for the night at the very end of the pontoon after we have filled the tank.

On this weekend, Bessaker celebrates the annual Fish Festival. The small community attracts droves of home and foreign fishing enthusiasts. Small houses, apartments and motorboats are offered for rent from January to November. Many make use of the opportunity. They catch, gut, clean, freeze, pack and take the fish home.



The festival was started in 1980 and is celebrated ever since with great effort. First the participants go fishing, then prizes are awarded and finally the entire village feasts together with the tourists. A short stroll through the place reveals what the inhabitants put together for the occasion.

There is the wooden stage for the presentation of the community theater, the beer tent and various stalls offering food and drink, an amazing variety considering the number of inhabitants: only two hundred people live here.

And the display of this funny boat emphasizes with what ardor the people cherish

their festival: They create elaborate souvenirs of past events: a rowboat with a hand-knitted coat!

Bessaker was a port of call for the Hurtigruten years ago. The ships no longer stop here. But during the festival the captains make an exception: The *Troll Fjord* reduces her speed, drifts very slowly into the bay, wildly blows the horn, short and long, over, and over again.



On the pier in front of the store, the performers in their costumes, ready for the performance, wave, cheer, dance, brandish small flags and thank the ship for the honor with many a shouted commentary, a boisterous turmoil! Their excitement is catching: moved we enjoy the perfect harbor cinema.

Years ago, Alex and I have climbed the hill above the harbor, inspected the German fortifications

of the Second World War and reveled in the grandiose view. We want to repeat the experience and take the almost perpendicular stairs to the beginning of the footpath. The ascent is steep, Renate and Mike make it to the top. Alex and I turn back half-way up, avoiding the awe-inspiring descent over the grassy slope after a strenuous walk uphill. We are getting old.

**Friday, July 19.** The store opens at 09:00. We buy a few things and cast off around 10:00. An hour later we set sails. The wind is rather unstable, the engine has to help once in a while. Despite the occasional droning we enjoy the great weather.

Renate spoils us with stunning sandwiches. Everything is right, the look, the content, and the presentation. Thank you, Renate, we appre-



ciate your effort to do us good.

The lighthouse in the Nærøysundet makes another alluring picture as we approach Rørvik. They keep fascinating me with their uncountable shapes and innumerable back drops, I must take a picture.

We have been on the go for eight hours; the bridge near Rørvik is in sight, Renate in lookout position.



Right under the bridge we take in the sails. Soon we will reach the marina. I vaguely remember the place. We once left *Silmaril* here for a short time, I recall the spot on the jetty and the shrimp boat, but not much more. Turning into the entrance to the harbor the whole picture comes to my mind: the rescue ship, the marina buildings up above the jetties.

The guest pontoon is almost full. There would be room for us between two boats, if one or the other would move a little. Yes, the Englishman pulls a bit forward and I can maneuver *Silmaril* in the opening.

The *Wish Hound* with the Blue Ensign (she belongs to a royal club) lies right behind us. Mike talks to her skipper Nigel and finds out, who would believe it, that he knows the place where Mike grew up and even remembers some names of Mike's school mates.

Nigel and his two crew members are going north; we will probably meet them again.

We are planning to stay for two days. It's already getting late; we arrived around 19:00. So, the visit to the town is postponed until tomorrow.



**Saturday, July 20.** Renate and I need to wash. We load the machine up in the marina building and walk to the museum. Alex and Mike load the gas bottles into the dinghy and take them to the garage



where we filled them before, hoping to find the same service. They will meet us at the museum later on.



From the marina, we see a dinghy land at the museum pontoon. Yes, it's them!

They must have left the bottles there and came right back.



We visit the impressive exhibits about fishing and living at the sea together. The old harbor is home of hundreds, maybe thousands of seagulls. They nest on roofs and every imaginable little ledge.



They cleverly ignore the wire above the roof. Screeching and flapping wildly they fight for the best spots. The noise is something!



A couple of fledged birds sit on the ground and consider fleeing! But they must be used to people walking past; they just watch us closely and keep still.

We eat two kilos of shrimp for dinner!

After enjoying the sight and waving good bye to the *Vesterålen* and the *Finnmarken* at the Hurtigruten pier, we go to the

pub, have a night cap, and talk to the barkeeper and the waitress for a long while.

**Sunday, July 21.** After a nice long breakfast, we cast off around 09:00. I manage to get *Silmaril* out of her parking lot without a problem. Nigel and his crew have cast off already and have left us wide room to maneuver.

I steer *Silmaril* out of the marina, around the museum and we are on our way heading for the famous gigantic hole in the mountain, Torget on Brackholmen, a little south of Sandessjøen. The hole was eroded by the sea in time immemorial.



We sail with wind astern between 3kts and 18kts. Mike is at the helm and manages the many wind shifts brilliantly. But steering is strenuous.

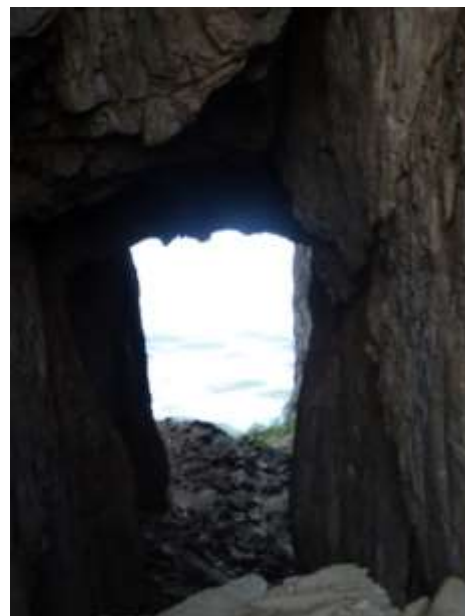
And suddenly the wind dies. We take the sails in and start the engine. The sky is cloud-covered, the water still pretty choppy, large flocks of seagulls around us, even high up in the clouds.



Shortly after 16:00 we turn into the little bay; the *Wish Hound* lies at the tiny pontoon. Nigel waves and gestures to come alongside his boat.

Persistent rain is announced for tomorrow; so, we start walking immediately toward the hole about 8km distant, hoping rain showers will spare us.

The ascent to the hole and scrambling among the rocks through the hole is rather straining.



Looking back on our way down on the other

side of the mountain I captivate a glimpse of two tiny figures at the highest point of the ascent at the base of the hole, that shows the breath-taking magnitude of the washed-out cave.

The return trip is long. Renate and I take the time to contemplate pretty things along the way.



Mike and Alex in deep discussions march far ahead of us; they are obli-

ous of their surroundings and of the increasing distance between us. Tired but happy we eat a little something and go to bed early.

**Monday, July 22.** We lie in; the noise of pouring rain in our dreams.

Nigel wants to leave; we make room and go right back to the jetty. The weather improves after lunch and we cast off from the small pontoon that has accommodated us so well. On our way to Sandessjøen, we make



a short detour and visit the Petter Dass Museum and the old parish.

Alex and I have been here before, taking a bike tour from Sandessjøen and want to show the famous place to Renate and Mike. The small landing offers just enough room for *Silmaril* at the wooden pier between the rocks and the pontoon, which is too short for us. The maneuver is challenging, but I succeed with the expert help of the others.

We climb the steep stairs and, resting a while on the wooden platform high up above the little harbor, we see the first house of the rectory, the huge memorial stone, and the slender spire of the old church. The outlook promises an instructive visit.

Petter Dass was an acclaimed poet, composer, clergyman, and landowner in the 17th century. Still today he is a celebrity, said to be the greatest poet of Norway, at least in these parts. The museum was designed by the famous architect's office Snøhetta, inaugurated after a few delays in 2007.



The building stands in a swath cut out from the rock, slick shiny colored surfaces on both sides. It overlooks the small bay. It is difficult to make an illustrative picture here. Its shape and position are much better perceived from the water now that we are on our way again.



Sailing along the coast below the famous pinna-



cles of the Seven Sisters offers glorious sights and induces to take far too many pictures, all of them rather like one another!

Mike is at the helm. Renate helps Alex to wind the new line onto the reel of the fishing rod. Once in a while they also need my hands to tame the fine nylon!

Finally, a good part is in place. The leftover tangle must be cut off and discarded, too bad for the waste, but there is no choice.

The wind freshens when we reach the approaches to Sandessjön and I turn into the harbor with a stiff breeze.



The jetties in the guest harbor are full, but after a few turns we find a space at the pontoon of a chandlery. Nobody is around, no one objects, we tie up and walk to town to eat. The Norwegian restaurants are already closed, only the Chinese are open, not bad, we get some pretty good food. We enjoy a peaceful evening and admire a strange bird in the sky,



could well be a cloud nuthatch, *Sitta europaea nubile*, a new subspecies!

**Tuesday, July 23.** Time for a long elaborate breakfast. Renate and Mike go off to find some food we need.

A delicate little bird on the boat across the pontoon amuses us with his capers and excited chirping.

Toward lunchtime we cast off and go to the diesel pump. The boys fill the tank and all the empty jerrycans. Out of the harbor a stiff breeze blows *Silmaril* on the nose. Once again, the stinking monster is growling. At least we do not have to swallow the diesel fumes. The wind takes it away with it. An ambulance ship roars past us on the port side. These ships are fully equipped for medical emergencies on the islands and remote shores. They sail at 30kts when called and it is obviously the case here.



Later on, the wind is acting up, within minutes we get everything from 15kts from NW to 4kts from S. Hustle and bustle on board with furling and unfurling of the genoa, taking in and hoisting the main sail. We do our best to sail with the wind, but eventually we surrender and engage the engine to keep an acceptable course toward the island of Stigen.



Friends of Anne and Raymond live there at the isolated bay of Breivika and we will pay Gunn and Stein a visit.

Stein must have known of our arrival from Raymond. He is already on the little jetty as we turn into the bay.

The self-made construction is simply unbelievable; a small motorboat and a rowboat are moored at it. Out in the bay lies their sailboat *Paquita* on a buoy and on another one the float, that Stein is about to bring in to leave the buoy free for *Silmaril*. He will moor the strange construction on the jetty.



The float is his stone-working vehicle. It's wooden crane above a trap door is designed to transport large stones for the completion of the landing and the

slip. At low water, Stein searches the shore for boulders of a certain shape and size, opens the trap door, maneuvers the float over the boulder, fastens the crane's chain around the suitable specimen and waits for high water. Now he can lift the rock and bring it to where he needs it. Ingenious!

What joy to meet Gunn. She greets us like old friends and shows us her "estate". The modest home was built in the 1940s. They bought it and remodeled it to their needs. They have electricity, but the water must be collected from the roof. In the course of time, Stein built small buildings around the home, a



summer room to accommodate family and guests for grill parties, a new out-



house with two seats and a grand view over the water to the mountains, a small guesthouse.



Their grand-children visit often grandma's and grandpa's paradise. And the two receive overnight guests frequently.

Above the jetty Stein is constructing a boathouse, shelter for the motorboat and lots of equipment in winter or bad weather year-round. He is always building something, despite his 71 years. (Gunn took the last two pictures)



A traditional open row boat is turning into the bay, two men in it, one rowing the other steering.



The visitors are expected. They are friends of friends and are to stay overnight. Rein, the helmsman, has started rowing in Oslo, Karl has joined him and will stay for two weeks. Rein intends to row all the way to Tromsø, almost another 300nm. They will stay for two days, a welcome change to sleep under a roof in a bed instead of in a tent on the ground.

We will be eight people for dinner. Gunn has prepared the ingredients for "fish packages", fiskepakke in Norwegian: Butter, then leeks, onions, celery, carrots, all of it



finely chopped and briefly boiled potato slices. Stein has fished a bucket full of pollack.

Everything is ready on a small table and we have to prepare the packages ourselves: layer the preferred ingredients on a double sheet of tinfoil, twist it into a tight package and put it on the large home-made grill. Butter first and last is the only advice we get!

Aquavit, beer, and wine are served to this scrumptious fish meal that is of course accompanied by Flatbrød and some other specialties.

Gunn presents a huge fruit pie topped with meringue for dessert. What a feast. The unforgettable ambiance, the overwhelming hospitality, the enthralling discussions will remain in our thoughts forever.

Gunn and Stein expect us at 10:00 for breakfast! No back talk. We may take the motor boat, drive out to *Silmaril* and dream of row boats, fish, and glorious food.



**Wednesday, July 24.** The kitchen table is laden with the things the Norwegians enjoy for an elaborate morning meal: various sorts of bread, cheese, sausage, butter, jam, assorted greens, mayonnaise, caviar, and a tall pile of waffles. Another fish meal is planned for the

evening. Alex and Stein go out on *Paquita* and catch about 10kg of pollack and mackerel. Stein cleans and filets them on the float. Alex helps and Renate takes pictures of the two fishermen.

While the boys go fishing, we women gather berries. Renate and I make jam on *Silmaril*; Gunn takes hers home and prepares the food for dinner. She slices the pollack, boils it in salted water, and boils carrots and potatoes. Stein meanwhile cures the mackerel. Another



phenomenal meal. After dinner in the kitchen, it is time to start leave-taking. We all go outside for pictures.



Everybody wants a memory picture. With a heavy heart we embrace and promise each other to celebrate our new friendship sometime somewhere.

Back on *Silmaril* we catch a glimpse of the silhouette of Hestmonkallen, the 57m tall mountain far away on the island of Hestmona that looks like a rider in a flowing cloak galloping west.



**Thursday, July, 25.** At 08:15 we try to cast off from the buoy under sail. There is almost no wind, but with a little help from the engine, we finally manage. Not a great maneuver. I steer *Silmaril*



out of the bay and toward Hestmon for a good picture. There it is, just at the right angle.

We continue north between the islands Ytter and Inner Kvarøya in the direction of Selsø, an old trading post.

Just ahead of the small island of Vikingen with the huge globe on a stone pedestal we take in the sails and pass the

arctic circle under engine. It's the first time for Renate and Mike to be up so far north and we celebrate with a tiny sip of whiskey from the small glasses and the mandatory sacrifice to Neptune, the leftover four splashes of whiskey over board. We are certain to guarantee the safe and happy remainder of our trip together.



Shortly after 10:00 we arrive in Selsø. The small marina is quite deserted. We moor *Silmaril* at the gest jetty and inspect the famous old store. In tightest spaces there is literally everything on sale, food, hardware, medication, garden supplies and more.



The young salesgirl is very friendly. We buy some stuff, order coffee and cake and enjoy the peace and quiet of the place and the great weather.

Alex finds the owner of the marina and inquires, whether he could offer a winter quarter for *Silmaril*. Selsø is very sheltered, the fast ferry lands regularly and the store sells



or orders everything one could possibly need; we would like to leave the boat here over winter. Let's see what comes of it.

We cast off and continue east. Renate is anxious to sail into a deep fjord. The northern arm of the Melfjord is the most beautiful fjord in the coun-

try according to our book; maybe just in this region. Never mind, we decide to go all the way to its end.

On our way we pass the accurate position of the arctic circle at latitude 66°33.9'N. The globe on Vikingen at 66°32.0'N, 012° 58.4'E is placed there, because the spot

lies on the route of the Hurtigruten ships. On each trip they celebrate here the passing of the arctic circle with a special little ceremony for the tourists, no matter the inaccuracy of the position.

The book does not promise too much: whooshing wa-



terfalls, spectacular mountaintops, cliffs of all shapes and colors,



quirky pictures of last winter's snow and far away high up the Svartisen, the largest glacier in Norway.

Renate sucks it all in! At the very end of the fjord we stay a while, enjoy the peace and quiet and the magnificent mountain world. And then we turn back to find an anchoring place. Just before 20:00 we drop the anchor behind the small island of Lamøya in the Esjeholmsundet. When all is done, *Silmaril* ready for the night, we



look around and see an eagle sitting on the bluff right behind us. Sheep are grazing around the small bay. They belong to the little farm, a house, a landing and two sheds opposite our anchoring place. A motorboat is tied to the pontoon. Nobody around. We pass an absolutely undisturbed night.



**Friday, July 26.** We wake up with dense fog all around us. After breakfast we can already see out of the bay. The anchor comes up and we sail into the misty shroud. With the radar and the AIS we do not really fear the bad visibility. What affects us more is the cold and the humidity. Far away there is a radiant spot in the sky that gives us hope for better conditions where we are headed, that the sun shines over the island of Fugløya.



And true enough, the weather improves noticeably.

At the entrance to the marina on the bird island, the seagulls shine in the air and on the water around the fishing boat headed for the harbor.

There is little space here. We find a spot alongside a Dehler 34 at the end of the guest pontoon.



She is the only Dehler we have come across this year. Her owner is a Norwegian solo sailor; we exchange our where from and where to in a friendly chat.

The island is famous for its huge population of puffins. High up in a valley between two steep cliffs they hatch their young, thousands of them.

Now the fledglings have left the nests and pass the time way out on the water together with their parents.

The ascent to the puffin valley is extremely steep and mostly in the shadow. It leads through the deep ravine full of scree and



boulders, large and huge. This is certainly not for Alex and myself. We settle for a hike to the shore and have fun watching the young seagulls sheltering from the wind behind a rock.



These are not the puffins we had hoped to see, but courageous attempts in stone and wire to lure tourists into spending some money to help the fisherman's income.!

Renate and Mike go swimming! I'm not tempted, but Alex returns to the shore later on and dips in.

**Saturday, July 27.** Alex wants to go up the mast to seal the cable holes. Mike cranks him up; Renate and I get what Alex needs and has forgotten to bring up in the first place and hoist it up to him. After a long time, Alex comes down covered in black Sikaflex. Are the holes for the cables leakproof now? We kept having water in the bilge and Alex assumed that it must run down inside the mast when it is raining; he is adamant to find the actual cause.



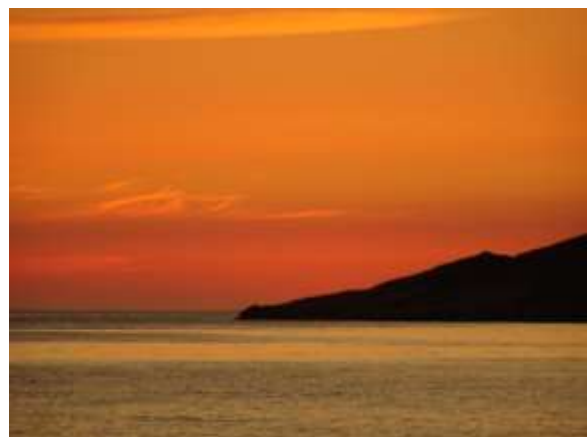
In the evening we walk to the beach. In the dusk Renate sights a back with a fin way out on the water.



Is it a small whale or a large dolphin? I only see a dark line on the surface, no wonder with my impaired eyesight and at such a distance. Not even my camera is more precise.

The sun slowly descends on a very flat inclined plane toward the spur of rock. It takes forever to sink all the way below the horizon. What a spectacle of colors! We watch totally fascinated.

At 22:51 the sun, an almost white sphere hovers surrounded by orange and yellow above the water; a few minutes later it hangs like a squat mushroom in the blood red sky and finally disappears behind the spit, leaving the sky illuminated for a long time.



We are grateful for the incredible sunset that we just experienced together, a wonderful memory of our trip.

Tomorrow we will sail to Bodø, where Renate and Mike will leave us in a few days.

**Sunday, July 28.** Gorgeous weather, no wind at all. We cast off and sail along the eastern coast of the island. Boat-houses line the shore.



An hour later we are already far away. Looking back, we ask ourselves what the white spot above the village might be. The binoculars give no answer.

We follow the route of the Hurtigruten ships. The *Richard With* overtakes us. The modern ships of the fleet are similarly constructed. They are smaller than most cruise ships, but much larger than the old ones, the *Lofoten* and the *Vesterålen*. Alex and I have traveled on both of them and love them dearly. We hope to get the chance to take another trip with one or the other. There is still no wind, just a gentle ripple on the water. It is warm, just wonderful. Renate and Mike enjoy their last day sailing.



They will take a plane home the day after tomorrow. I wonder what is in their minds. We are near Bodø. Airplanes above us, the lighthouse at the entrance to the harbor and the seventeen-story tall Scandic hotel.



We turn into the harbor and take the first space on the outer jetty. Our book marks the guest places right here, but we don't like the place, far too much swell from the passing fast ferries, trawlers, and pleasure boats of all sizes.

Mike takes the mobile radio and goes to explore the situation further in, where other guest boxes are marked in the book. He soon tells us to come quickly, that he has spotted two free spaces.

And we arrive in time, take the one that Mike has successfully kept for us and are very close to the inner pier, perfectly sheltered and not far from the hustle and bustle of the harbor.

Gunn and Stein are supposed to arrive shortly. They wrote that they will stop here on their way to Kabelvåg on the Lofoten. Alex goes out right away to reserve the second free box. The Norwegian neighbor is not amused, He also expects friends. But as he hears Alex talking to Stein on the phone, he grins and remarks that it could only be the same Stein he is expecting. Sure enough, it is the same Stein; what a coincidence! It goes without saying that we all spent the evening thoroughly celebrating with Aq-uavit and a very special coffee of Gunn's and Stein's friend.

**Monday, July 29.** We spend the day walking to town and shopping for the planned shrimp lunch with Gunn and Stein. Two ships arrive regularly at the pier and sell their freshly cooked shrimps directly from board. We buy two kilos, take them on board and eat the tasty little beasts with my homemade mayonnaise with lots of garlic, white bread, quantities of beer and coffee in company with our dear friends. What else could we enjoy more!



Gunn and Stein are going to leave in the afternoon. They will visit friends on the Lofoten. We will meet them in a bay and spend time together at anchor. Great outlook!

**Tuesday, July 30.** Renate and Mike are ready to leave. The airport is quite near and we walk there together. We are sad to let them go, but very happy to have had such a wonderful time together, great memories, never an adverse word, a perfect way to cement our friendship of long standing.

What a hilarious picture! The sculpture's fluke fits Mike's head perfectly. Did the lady who took the picture for us do it on purpose? A good laugh, a short embrace and they have disappeared.



Alex and I walk to the store, where we hope to find the necessary parts for the heater.

Later on, we take a bus to Saltstraumen, the strongest and largest tidal current in the world. The water flows with up to 40km/h, huge whirlpools, and swirls form, constantly moving and changing, a veritable maelstrom.

A bridge spans the water between Straumøy and the peninsula Knaplundsøya. In olden times a ferryman with his small boat took people across.

From the middle of the bridge we observe the awe-inspiring sights, the fast-flowing water, the foaming swirls, rocks left, right and in the middle.



A large rubber boat full of tourists drives



into the largest whirlpools. It is hard to see in the picture above; the close-up shows more detail: with their very strong engines, they manage to drive close to the center of the whirlpool, the perfect thrill ride. We can hardly imagine how the ferryman managed to control his

boat full of frightened passengers. The church was only reachable by ferry. Churchgoers had no choice, but risk the intimidating trip.

We wait for the last bus to Bodø near the church and think of the unthinkable danger of attending the service in those past times.

**Wednesday, July 31.** Our last day in Bodø. A boat with a Swiss flag lies on our pontoon. Alex talks to them; exchanges coordinates and inquires about their plans. They are on their way north and will leave their boat in the vicinity of Tromsø. We will certainly meet them again.

We leave tomorrow and *Silmaril* has to be converted back to two-crew arrangements. A few hours of routine chores and we are ready to go.

To conclude two incredibly eventful days we walk to the Scandic hotel, take the elevator to the 17th floor, buy two beers and relax.

The view is grand.



Looking for *Silmaril* we hardly see her



penned in between the two neighbors. But we know that hers is the tallest mast.

**Thursday, August 1.** We continue north. Alex has already chosen an anchoring place. On our way we pass Kjerringøy. The village has been a busy trading center already in the 17th century. Its natural harbor offered ideal conditions for shipping.

At the beginning of the 19th century, a prosperous merchant bought the place and developed it into a booming enter-

prise. Today about a dozen buildings are an outdoor museum; it is now open to the public, certainly worth a visit.

We learn a lot about fishing in general and about the precise difference between clipfish and stockfish. Clipfish, mostly cod, was cleaned, cut open, salted, and spread on the rocks for drying. Every evening women and children had to collect it, stack it and cover it with a wooden lid to protect it from precipitation. In the morning, the fish had to be spread on the rocks again. Stockfish on the other hand was cleaned, tied together in twos at the tail and hung from huge wooden frames to dry.

We also read about the unbelievable differences between masters and servants. The large residential home of the rich mer-



chant, his huge boathouse, the number of service buildings and the monumen-



tal church bear witness to his great wealth. The richest and last owner of the estate is said to have spent as much money for champagne at his wedding as he paid his maids in two years!

Our impressions are twofold. On the one hand we are impressed by the vast number



of exhibits, the detailed explanations, and really good pictures. On the other hand, the fact that not much has changed in the world is depressing. The gap between rich and poor is still unbelievably wide and not diminishing.

The modern village obviously lives from tourism. The harbor is quite big, has new pontoons. Expensive boats are tied up in large numbers, summer houses line the entire bay. The village still seems to have a knack how to make money.

We cast off at 16:00 and sail to Helsenessund. It is too late to reach the anchoring place before dusk.

The sky spoils us with brilliant clouds; the stony landscape adds its innumerable constantly changing craggy shapes to



the fascinating picture. There is no humus on the steep cliffs. Everywhere we see traces of erosion, naked pinnacles, landslides, washed out ravines.

Despite the wildness, ruggedness, inaccessibility and bleakness of the shores and islands, we love the country and its people and are very grateful that we are here again.

We tie up in Helsenessund Marina and go for short a walk through the village..

*Silmaril* has received a Norwegian neighbor. We talk to them briefly and

exchange the where from and where to. Around midnight, Ale takes a wonderful pic-



ture, not a wisp of wind, glassy water and dead silence, as he tells me in the morning.

**Friday, August 2.** Many small marinas collect the harbor fees in cash. Envelops are ready for the name of the owner, the boat, and its length that determines the amount due. We don't have enough coins or small bills to put into the mailbox.

Men are working in the boat yard on the other side of the marina. Maybe they can help us out. We stroll along the wooden walk-



way. Small boats must be tied with long lines or they would sit on the rocks at low tide.



A jelly fish swims in the clear water.



In the boat yard a young man is working on an old boat. We talk to him. He has no money, but readily answers our questions. His name is Alexander Figenschou, he lives in Tromsø and goes fishing on his father's own ship. Father and son work for two months in winter in Finnmarken and make enough money for the rest of the year. His boat is called *Lykkepillen*, the lucky pill.



She was built in 1936 and was owned by a midwife who traveled among the islands for many years, and brought twenty-nine babies into the world. Alexander refurbishes the *Lykkepillen* and will use her as a pleasure boat, maybe even to live on.

He gives us an address, where we might bring *Silmaril* for the winter.

In the Coop store they change our money and we walk back to the boat. Alex finds out that the navigation program on the iPad is dead. He now needs a good internet connection und lots of time! The restaurant is the place to go.

The village is very much to our liking. It provides sailors with everything they need in a leisurely atmosphere, a small sheltered marina, a boat yard and a powerful crane within walking distance, a landing stage for the fast ferry, a great number of attractions on the surrounding islands and the imposing mountains of the Lofoten on the horizon.

We eat in the restaurant. Alex is still working on the new installation of the program and I wander back to the boat.

A traditional sailboat is tied up at the new guest jetty. The fast ferry is just landing.



Monkshood grows along the path and in many gardens.



A furry little beast sits on the sprayhood.



When Alex shows up, we prepare to go. At 14:00 we leave and sail toward the rocky maze of the Grøtøya Leia toward Nordskot. The chart shows a tangle of islands of all sizes, innumerable rocks above and below the water.

In reality the passage is well marked and not a problem at all in good weather. Markers of all kinds show the way past shallow water and rocks. There are cairns, poles, small lighthouses that indicate where we have to avoid dangerous spots.





We feel safe.

We arrive in Nordskot rather late. The bay is full of boats and buoys and we have a hard time to find a good spot to drop the anchor; the bay is too crowded or too shallow.

The jetty seems too exposed to the swell for a comfortable night.

So, Alex goes to inquire about two large

yellow buoys we see a bit further out toward the northern shore. They might be public. Yes, they belong to the museum and are reserved for visitors. Although the museum is closed, we are welcome to make fast at one of them.

*Silmaril* is soon moored and we enjoy her gentle drifting and the view around us in the calmness of the evening light.



Once in a while military jets roar past high up: two "flies" in the sky. We heard about NATO maneuvers; probably going on just now.

The disturbing noise soon diminishes and we talk about the events of the day and the prospect of seeing Gunn and Stein in an anchoring bay on the Lofoten tomorrow. They have proposed Gullvika



on Stormolla. We can hardly wait to sail with them.

An absolutely enchanting sunset concludes the long eventful day.

