

Winner of the FOA Barton Best Log award 2013 – Jeanette Haskov for the story of the voyage she and her husband Jens made from Norway to France and back via west coast UK and Ireland. Published in FisherLite Summer 2013.

### ***Going south (and then north again)***

*Jeannette Haskov tells the story of Maja's 2,500 mile trip from her Norwegian base (below) to Brittany via Britain's west coast.*



We were invited to a family reunion in south Brittany, near Redon. All the “normal” people came by car, by train or by plane. But not us. We came from Bergen (Norway) on *Maja*, our 30 ft Fisher motorsailor. We are retired so we have time.

Our ports of call on our way down:

Florvåg, on Askøy, an island west of Bergen (Norway), Lerwick (Shetland), Kirkwall (Orkney), Stornoway (Hebrides), Rona (Scotland), Portree (Isle of Skye), Kyleakin (Skye), Mallaig, Arinagour (Isle of Coll), Port Ellen, Rathlin (Northern Ireland), Glenarm, Belfast, Bangor, Ardglass, Peel (Isle of Man), Dublin (Republic of Ireland), Port Saint Mary (Scilly islands), Camaret (France), Sainte Marine, Port Halliguen, La Roche Bernard, and Redon (on the river La Vilaine), our last stop.

And back:

Redon, Port Halliguen, Concarneau, Port Saint Mary (Scilly Islands), Tresco (Scilly), Port Saint Mary, Campbeltown (Scotland), Tarbert, Ardrishaig (Crinan Canal), Crinan, Oban, Corpach (Caledonian canal), Laggan, Fort Augustus, Dochgarroch, Inverness, and Florvåg - back home.

We left Florvåg on Sunday, June 24 th and crossed over to the Shetland. I was sea sick most of the time and Jens was very tired when we arrived in Lerwick, Monday evening. It was then the 25 th of June, our 35 th anniversary. We were too tired to celebrate and did it the next day. We sailed south and were lucky to have a long period with northerly winds. The weather was nice but quite cold. If the weather forecast was bad, we had time to wait. In Dublin, we waited nine days, the wind was strong and from the south.

We met very nice people all the way, and we hope to meet them again.

We learnt to anchor in Rona. We don't do that in Norway. We tie the bow to a rock or a tree and have an anchor at the stern. We can even tie parallel to a cliff with a few fenders. We discovered also the importance of the tide and of a good timing to pass strong currents. Everybody advised us not to go when the wind is against the current. We had read about it in sea stories many times, but now it was real. We were surprised to see how far the sea is at low tide. In Ardglass we came at high water. The harbour looked very big but many marks made it a kind of slalom to come in. We didn't understand why. We understood at low water. In Bergen, the difference between high and low water is only 0,80 m-1 m. We learnt also to take a mooring, in Portree. We managed it without problem, I motored slowly and Jens took the buoy. We had a very small dinghy, without engine. In Coll, we were far away on one of the last mooring and it took us a long time to row to land against the wind. My husband says that I can get an engine for the dinghy at my next birthday!

We saw the difference between the north (from the Shetland to Northern Ireland), lightly populated, with not so many boats and the south, more populated and with more boats; and even more boats in Brittany. There the marinas were huge, Port Haliguen has 1150 places! On a nice day with good weather, we could see several hundreds boats going in all directions. The traffic on the VHF didn't stop. In Norway, it can be silent for long periods.



We stopped in small harbours (Glenarm, Kyleakin, for exemple), natural anchorages (Rona), moorings (Portree, Port Saint Mary), small marinas and big marinas.

We spent nine days in Poolbeg Yacht and Boat Club near Dublin (*arriving in Dublin, above*). The people there were very friendly, five minutes after arrival, we were already invited to a barbecue the next Saturday. We were very lucky to see the Olympic Parade on a big screen in a pub in Dublin. For an ambiance! We had time to visit Dublin on

Winner of the FOA Barton Best Log award 2013 – Jeanette Haskov for the story of the voyage she and her husband Jens made from Norway to France and back via west coast UK and Ireland. Published in FisherLite Summer 2013.

our bicycles in nine days. We went also to see a River Dance show. I went to visit some museums and it was very interesting to learn a little of Ireland's history.

We met several Fishers on our trip: the first one in Kirkwall, an F25 in Peel (*see below*), several in France, and specially an F30 on the river La Vilaine in France. We talked with the owner, Maurice, and visited his boat which was on land. All the Fisher owners we talked to were always very sympathetic. People (not only Fisher owners!) would share with us the good places they knew and the knowledge they had of currents and tide.



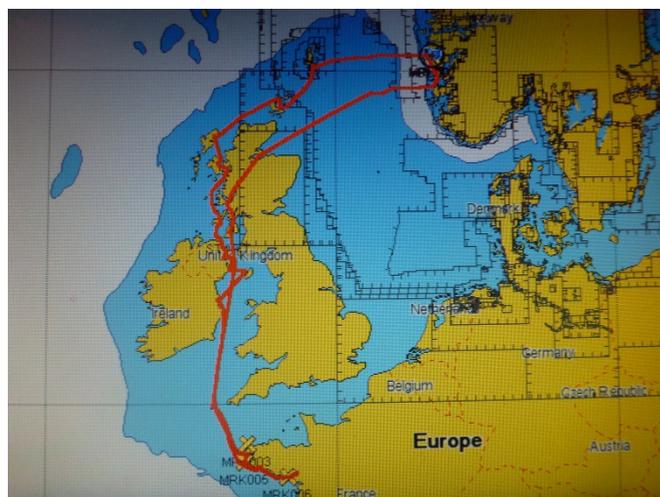
We experienced all kinds of weather, from no wind at all and a quiet sea, to the wind increasing to force 7. It was between Ardglass and Peel, only a short crossing. The wind was strong but it hadn't blown long enough to make big waves. Jens and *Maja* are very good in bad weather, and me ... I am very happy when we arrive in a harbour. But I am becoming braver and braver. We encountered thick fog near the Scilly Islands on our way back. Fortunately we are well equipped with AIS and radar, so we felt quite safe. We had long passages, Norway-Shetland (35 hours), Dublin-Scilly (48 hours), Scilly-Camaret (France) (48 hours), Concarneau (France)-Scilly (37 hours), Scilly-Campbeltown (65 hours) and Inverness-Norway (73 hours).

I must say that I like the night sailing. I don't see the waves (!) and it is a nice feeling to hear the nice sound of the boat making good speed on the water. I like also to be "Captain". One is steering *Maja*, and the other one is sleeping (or

trying to sleep) in the berth which is on the right of the stairs going down. We can see each other and can communicate together. We changed every two hours, but were very flexible if one of us was more tired than the other. One night, between Dublin and Scilly, we were followed by a large group of gannets. They are beautiful birds but so many, flying very close to our boat, in the dark, and making much noise was a little scary. They followed us for several hours.

On our last leg, the last night, we couldn't come to Bergen. The wind and the waves had turned north east, exactly the direction we wanted to go; and, in addition, a seismic boat asked us to change our course. We were going to pass her close, but we couldn't come closer than 3 nm on each side and 5 nm astern of her. We had to sail more south. After that, we tried to motor north-east, but it was very uncomfortable. We decided to sail to Haugesund, a town 100 km south of Bergen. Between Haugesund and Bergen, we could navigate all the way on fjords, well protected. As the weather was beautiful, sunny and quiet, we had a very relaxing last day, the 23 rd of September. We had time to prepare our luggage and it was a lot after three month living on *Maja*. We came to Florvåg in the afternoon and our daughter and grandson (16 months) were waiting for us. It was pure happiness to see them again.

We had covered 2500 nm in three months and had a very, very nice voyage. (*Maja's track is shown below*).



If you are interested, I wrote a blog <http://going-south-jeannette.blogspot.no/> in French and English.



Winner of the FOA Barton Best Log award 2013 – Jeanette Haskov for the story of the voyage she and her husband Jens made from Norway to France and back via west coast UK and Ireland. Published in FisherLite Summer 2013.