

# 2023 Newsletter - SY MAYONA II

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25.5.2023, Newsletter 1/2023

## Channel Island Sark



*La Coupée*

Dear sailing friends

Since May 17th we have been back on the high seas with our MAYONA II. Starting in Cherbourg, we first sailed towards the Channel Islands to wait for a good weather window for the crossing to England and also to return to Cherbourg to take a few ordered spare parts on board.

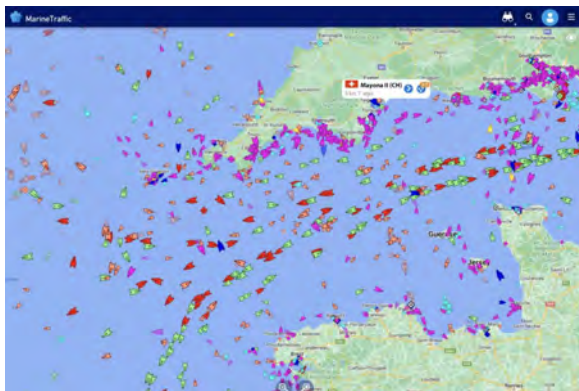
A first highlight was the island of Sark. A piece of nature with 600 inhabitants and totally without cars(!) except for a tractor for the fire engine and ambulance trailer and a few luggage transports for the tourists. But you can also get from one place to another on foot, by horse-drawn carriage or by bicycle. The circumnavigation hiking route on this plateau island measures about 15 km and includes many spectacular viewpoints. The most spectacular view, however, is at Isthmus La Coupée between Sark and little Sark. With its magnificent coastal views, this 100m long concrete walkway was built in 1946 by German prisoners of war. It is 80 m above the sea and only 3 m wide. There is a strict ban on bicycles because of possible gusts of wind.

The political situation is also unusual. From 1579 until as late as 2008, Sark was run as a pure feudal state by a single family. Against his will, the Seigneur of Sark, island chief

by succession, has since had to relinquish some powers. The current one is called Christopher Beaumont. He remains feudal lord and collects the rent for the British Crown (Charles III). Nevertheless, there is something globalised about the island. We met the sister of the postmistress (in the same family for years). This sister actually lives in Australia, but her husband is currently working in Dubai (actually wanted to take a job in Switzerland before the pandemic, which then fell victim to the pandemic), the son is in England and the daughter in Holland. And last but not least: Not only is there no asphalt, there is also no income tax!

26.05.2023, Newsletter 2/2023

## AIS (Automatic Identification System)



Channel Traffic on Marine Traffic



Screenshot from our Chartplotter with AIS Signals

Do you know what an AIS is? It's a VHF-based system (approx. 30 km range) to identify ships and avoid collisions. It is mandatory equipment for commercial shipping and ships over 20 metres in length. It is becoming increasingly common on cruising yachts. Last year we read about it several times because oligarchs on the run with their luxury yachts switched off their AIS and could no longer be found directly. Even fishermen sometimes switch off their AIS so that you don't know where they are fishing (this happened to Boris Hermann on his last leg of the Vendée Globe where he rammed a fishing trawler). this spring we replaced our old AIS receiver (only we could see the other boats, but they couldn't see us) with a modern active AIS. This system now allows us to identify (with names and other details) all vessels with AIS within a radius of about 20 nm and therefore it is also possible to radio them specifically. This new system also has an alarm if we are on a collision course with another ship. This is very helpful in busy areas such as the canal. This device now shows us on the chart plotter exactly at what distance and in what time we are crossing which ship. This definitely makes sailing in the English Channel much more relaxed.

As a side effect, there are now web service providers that record all these signals and make them available online on the internet. This makes it possible for anyone to call up our position in real time via the Internet (e.g. MarineTraffic). In our case, this is only possible in real time near the coast (approx. 50 km), as we have not yet coupled our AIS with a satellite telephone.

It is always impressive for us how much shipping traffic is travelling all over the world (see picture)!

Have fun and see you soon!

Lukas and Mayumi

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4.6.2023, Newsletter 3/2023

## St. Michaels Mount – the British twin brother of Mont Saint Michel



*Anchoring in front of St. Michaels Mount*



On the very outside of Cornwall, a tidal island (accessible on foot at low tide, only by boat at high tide) rises out of the sea, which looks very much like Mont Saint Michel. It is no coincidence that the structure on this island was built by Benedictine monks from Mont Saint Michel in Normandy in the 11th century, following the example of their homeland. Later, the religiously used island became a base for fortifying the English south coast against the Spanish and other invaders, and a castle was built. For several hundred years the estate has been privately owned by the St. Aubyn family, who still live here. Nevertheless, the island can be visited 6 days/week. It is not a world heritage site of Unesco, but still served in the James Bond film “Never say never again” this island a brief moment as a backdrop.

It is also great that you can anchor comfortably with the ship in front of this island, which is unfortunately hardly possible in this form in front of Mont Saint Michel, because the tides are even higher and the currents are much stronger.

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Newsletter 4/2023 8.6.2023

## In the English Caribbean?



*Landfall in the Scilly Islands*

20 nm (40 km) west of Land's End (southwest tip of Cornwall) lies the archipelago of the Scilly Islands. Of the total of 200 islands, the five largest islands are inhabited by about 2000 locals today. Because of the Gulf Stream, the climate here is very mild, almost subtropical, with many sunny days. The many flowers, azaleas, red arborvitae and pine trees that thrive here are great. However, today it is blowing at 60km/h and it feels extremely cold... so we enjoy a rest day at anchor on the ship before heading north in a few days.

However, we hope to enjoy turquoise bays and white sandy beaches before then, even though the water temperature is still well below 15°C.

We also want to see the "Wreck Museum". A collection of figureheads from the many stranded ships in a tropical garden.

There are many shallows here and it is advisable to study the tide tables (approx. 5 m tidal range) very carefully. This would actually be an ideal place to do "beaching" once with our ship (stand with the ship on the dry sand at low tide and sail away again at high tide).

By the way, the c in Scilly Islands was only added in the 17th century to distance the name from the word silly, which in this time got more and more a negative meaning. Best regards from the Scilly Islands, which do not yet remind us of the Caribbean in terms of temperature!

Newsletter 5/2023, 13.6.2023

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## Aberystwyth – a normal village or not?



Aberystwyth is an old Welsh town with 20,000 inhabitants. An old castle, a lookout point "Constitution Hill with funicular railway", many pubs, a large sandy beach (seaside resort) and many shapeless but humorous inhabitants - and the whole thing feels a bit "run down". The entrepreneur Thomas Savin wanted to develop Aberystwyth into a fashionable seaside resort in the century before last. He brought the railway to the village in 1864 and built a luxury hotel, which was hardly ever booked. The hotel was eventually sold at a spot price to the university, which was founded in 1860. The special thing about the university, apart from its excellent reputation, is that Prince Charles (now King Charles) also completed part of his studies here alongside a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry. In the century before last, the harbour here served as a departure point for numerous emigrants to the New World and as a loading port for the nearby lead mines. The many "ice cream shops" that also sell ice cream for dogs are something special, somehow not entirely unappealing..., even if it wasn't hot enough for a really big ice cream - but maybe that's why the dogs are an economic diversification. Of course, a crime series was also filmed here: Inspector Mathias - Murder in Wales (ARD/Netflix). Somehow an endearing English village with the typical specialities and open-minded and happy inhabitants and happy dogs

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Newsletter 6/2023, 16.6.2023

## The Skerries – a lighthouse island and a bird breeding place



On the way from Holyhead to the Isle of Man\* there is a lighthouse island with a very small sheltered bay, which was recommended to us by a local sailor as a stopover in calm weather. As we were hardly moving with the wind, but at best with the current and the engine, we tried to reach this small bay.

But with a sailboat with normal draft (without centerboard) this would hardly have been possible without getting stuck in the mud or on the rocks at low tide.

Already at the entrance we were warmly greeted by seals.

Inside the bay, we experienced a natural paradise, the likes of which can rarely be found. Birds wherever the eye can see... In particular, this is one of the rare breeding areas of the Arctic roseate terns. There is no lighthouse keeper on the island any more, but "only" scientists who observe the birds. Besides the roseate terns, there are many puffins and, of course, gulls. The noise of the birds and, at times, the "grunting" of the seals is striking. The scientist who is here at the moment always walks around with an umbrella. Why? If you look closely, you can see that the umbrella is all shitty. In other words, she is not protecting herself from the rain, but from the bird sh...

# The Isle of Man\*



The Isle of Man\* (50 kilometres long) lies in the middle of the Irish Sea, almost equidistant from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Like the Channel Islands, it is not part of the United Kingdom, but is more directly under the control of the Crown and is self-governing with one of the oldest parliaments. The Isle of Man\* is famous for at least 3 things

1. The TT (Tourist Trophy) - the deadliest motorbike race in the world (over 270 deaths in total). Since 1907, motorbike and sidecar fans have been meeting here every year to race around the island on the normal, but closed, roads on a 60 km course. Top speeds are over 320 km/h and the average speed of the fastest riders is 220 km/h. An NZJ journalist recently calculated that this would be the equivalent of circling Lake Zurich in 18 minutes. It is, so to speak, the heaven of the road racing scene and its hell. To train and familiarise themselves with the track, many drivers now practice in front of the computer with their Playstation! 84'000 people live here on the island, with over 40'000 more travelling here for the races! The races were at the beginning of June, so we "luckily" missed the spectacle and one more death!
2. The Bee Gees, actually an Australian pop group consisting of 3 brothers, all born on the Isle of Man and later back in the UK. Their big breakthrough came in 1977 with the soundtrack to the film Saturday Night Fever (a cult film for our generation starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton John). They are listed in the

Guinness Book of Records as the most successful family band!

3. Manx cats (manx is the name for the inhabitants of the island) are a special breed that has no tail. This taillessness is due to a genetic mutation as a result of extreme inbreeding. According to Wikipedia, this taillessness leads to the typical hopping gait of this breed, as known from rabbits. There is even a coin with an image of this cat! But as everyone knows, I don't have a soft spot for cats anyway.

And now we're sailing with the long-awaited south wind straight from the Isle of Man\* to Ladybay in the Firth of Clyde... Here we come, Scotland!

Newsletter 8/2023 26.6.2023

## A Scottish rainy day



*Elvis mit Heiligenschein*



*Kelvingrove Orgel von TC.Lewis (1902)*

Yes, they really do exist, the rainy days in Scotland... You can use such a rainy day to pursue exciting stories. A good starting point is the unique Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum... a park with a very representative building in Spanish Baroque style from the turn of the century.

A popular rumour is that the building was built the wrong way round and the architect







Amazed? Yes, sometimes you can climb small mountains with sailing ships. If you want to sail from Glasgow to the Hebrides there are two ways:

1. One is to sail around the strong current Mull of Kintyre. We all know the Mull of Kintyre from the number 1 song of the same name by Paul Mac Cartney, in which he heart-warmingly sings about this peninsula.
2. But you can also take the shortcut through the Crinan Canal. This 14 km long canal was completed in 1801 (probably for the transport of whisky) and is today equipped with 15 locks and overcomes a height difference of 40 m. The canal can be navigated from the top to the bottom. First upwards and then downwards again. So you go over the mountain, so to speak. The landscape passes through nature reserves and small villages. Almost all of the locks “have” to be operated by the crewmembers, as do the 7 bridges. A great change from the wild sea up there.

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Newsletter 10, 8.7.2023

**Barra (Outer Hebrides): 4 seasons in a single day and the strangest scheduled airport in the world!**



In the very south of the Outer Hebrides is the island of Barra with its 1000 inhabitants. Here we experienced 4 seasons in a single day and the strangest airport in the world! It was already quite windy when we arrived, but even more wind and storms were forecast, so we were allowed to moor behind a large, old, iron square-rigged sailing boat and were thus perfectly protected against wind and waves. Going ashore was always a big gymnastics exercise over this big ship... and often quite wet, because the jetty was always washed over with all the wind.

But the airport here is totally unique, because the runway is on the sandy beach and can only be approached at low tide. Of course, this also means that there is no usual timetable for the scheduled flights, as the tide does not go out at the same time every day...

In addition, the airport is only approached with a Twin Otter (space for 19 passengers), as this requires a particularly short runway. Since a maximum of two planes land per day, the residents can collect shells on the "flight path" in between, but are then turned away accordingly shortly before landing.

When we were here, the wind gusted up to 40 kn and so the plane flew over the beach several times before landing.

It doesn't seem to be that easy! But the splashing as it passes through the puddles on landing and take-off looks spectacular.

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Newsletter 12, 26.7.2023

## Jura – Isle of Jura



Gulf of Corryvreckan

After a great and wild time in the Outer Hebrides, we have now arrived on the island of Jura in the Inner Hebrides. Everything is a bit more peaceful and quiet here, so that I finally find time and leisure for a newsletter again. The island has 200 inhabitants on an area twice the size of the canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden. In addition to the inhabitants, however, there are many more red deer and seals. However, there are 3 things that I consider particularly worth mentioning

1. The Jura Distillery is certainly a familiar name to all whisky lovers. Whisky has been brewed here for 200 years. Even though this distillery is very small, there are more whisky barrels on the island than inhabitants, which is not so difficult with only 200 inhabitants.
2. Corryvreckan: Between Jura and Scarba lies a strait (Gulf of Corryvreckan). Here you can marvel at one of the world's largest natural whirlpools. Due to the tides and the special topographical underwater conditions with a large mountain below the water surface, current speeds of over 8 kn (15 km/h) can occur here. Due to the pyramid-shaped cone under water, large whirlpools can form in various places, which can rise up to 5 metres. An impressive spectacle. For a long time, this passage was considered impassable. Today we know the connections and know: The right timing is everything!
3. From spring 1947 until his death in 1950, George Orwell lived here on Jura in a farmhouse with his adopted son Richard to work on his novel 1984, which he wrote from 1947 to 1948 and which was his last work. He described the island as "an extremely inaccessible place".

If you are looking for good whisky, nature and solitude, this is definitely the place for you!

Newsletter 13, 11.8.2023

## Hook Lighthouse



Some time has passed since my last newsletter. We have left Scotland and arrived in Southern Ireland. Once again I found out that the Irish Sea is not so attractive as a sailing area for us. Our highlight, apart from the island of Rathlin with its 100 inhabitants in the north of Ireland, was a meeting with a professional colleague and friend in Dublin with an extensive visit to a music pub.

Here in the south, we visited Hook lighthouse yesterday. It is probably the oldest still functioning lighthouse and dates back to the early 13th century (older than the Confederation). For a long time, monks were “the keepers of the light”.

Similar to Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, several seas come together up here. This means that special wave formations and currents can occur. This, together with the many rocky shoals, makes this area one of the largest ship graveyards and a very dangerous place for a long time. There is also a lot of inhospitable weather here, sometimes even mixed with thick fog. It was not until 1996 that this lighthouse was automated and the lighthouse keeper was withdrawn from this location after more than 800 years.

We ourselves are currently moored east of the lighthouse in the harbour of Kilmore Quay and are waiting for good winds to sail on via the Scilly Islands through the Bay of Biscay to La Coruna.

Today I will also try to repair our broken generator by replacing the broken impeller, after hopefully finding all the lost rubber lips of the impeller in the cooling system. With best regards

Lukas, Mayumi and Michel

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Newsletter 14, 22.8.2023

## From South Ireland to La Coruna



On 12 August, we left the fascinating north (especially Scotland) behind us and headed south. Mayumi, Michel and I left the protective harbour of Killmore Quay in 30 knots of northerly wind and after 30 hours of very strenuous sailing we made a short stopover in Newlyn on the south-western tip of England to recharge the ship's batteries (the generator was having a problem) and our own batteries.

With good wind forecasts, albeit a little weak for our boat, which is built for strong winds, we set off across the Bay of Biscay on Monday morning. The weather forecast promises a calm crossing with pleasant light winds and a low-pressure system with strong southerly winds at the end of the week, so we make every effort to arrive in La Coruna harbour before Friday morning.

before Friday morning. Unfortunately, this meant that we had to run the engine quite a lot for support. Thanks to our large diesel tank, however, we didn't have to worry about that. On Friday, gusts of up to 50 knots (100 km/h) reached us in the harbour of La Coruna. We really did arrive on time!

These 1000 kilometres from the south of England to Spain not only take us into a different time zone, but also into a completely different world! On this crossing to this other world, we are accompanied by many dolphins and can even admire whales and a clear starry sky. Fishing is also more fun again, as the focus is no longer on mackerel but on our favourite fish, bonito (a type of tuna).

The closer we get to the Spanish coast, the bluer and warmer the sea and sky become. The water temperature is no longer 14°, but at least 20° and the swimmers no longer have to restrict themselves with a wetsuit.

Unfortunately, the days are also getting massively shorter and the high sun no longer casts the great shadows it did in Scotland. The weather is suddenly more stable and we no longer experience four seasons in one day. We now swap our down jackets and woolly hats for sun cream and sun hats.

Life in La Coruna couldn't be more different to the Irish harbour towns (e.g. Arklow - a place to get depressed). Suddenly everything takes place outside. Dining is not until 20:00, but from 20:00 at the earliest. We are happy to leave the English fish and chips behind us and try the wide variety of tapas. However, we already miss the Scottish haggis a little.

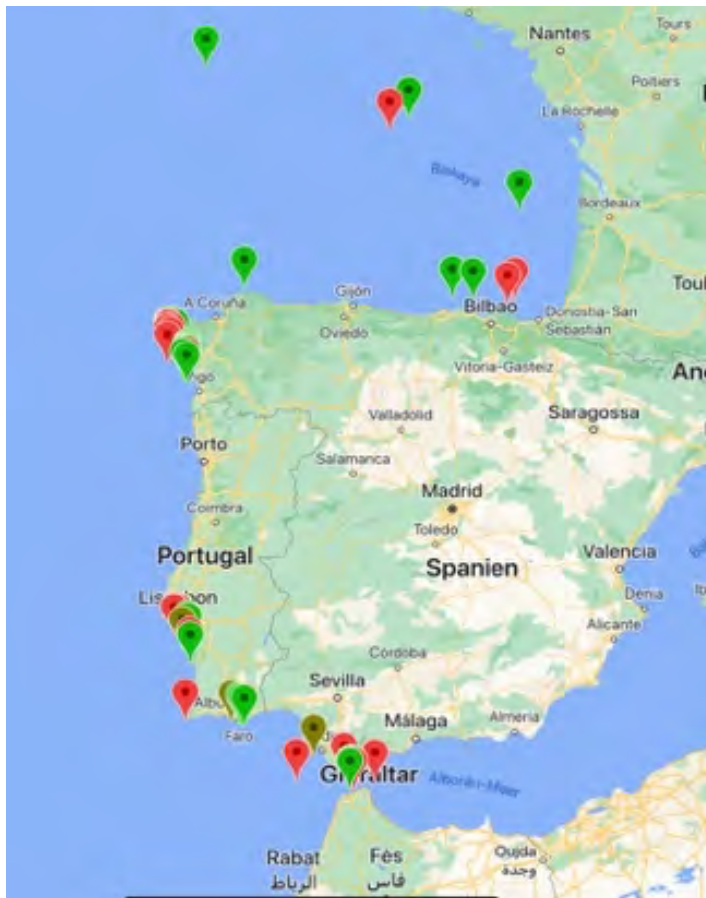
Our next leg to Lisbon will now be much more summery and the currents that have been a real challenge for us in the north will hardly exist any more. On the other hand, the big waves off Spain will keep us busy. The waves here come directly from America and just off the Spanish coast the sea depth will drop abruptly from 5000 metres to a few dozen metres. This can lead to large breakwaters, for example in Nazaré. When sailing on the sea, it can be completely calm. However, as soon as you want to enter certain harbours, the waves can make life very difficult and you are well advised to follow the recommendations of the harbour authorities and stick to the favourable time windows for entry and exit.

We are looking forward to this new sailing section with new and different challenges!!

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Newsletter 15/2023 31.8.2023

## What about the Orca's?



*Here is a map with the 2023 interactions, which can now be filtered by*

*date. This allows you to minimise the probability of a match!*

Since we have been travelling here in Spain/Portugal, many people have been asking me about the orca's. The attacks by these whales on sailing ship rudders off the Iberian Peninsula up to the Bay of Biscay have also been picked up again and again by the normal media recently. This has been an ongoing topic in specialist and sailing circles since 2020.

In 2020, shortly after the extensive two-month coronavirus lockdown with closed harbours and heavenly calm for the killer whales, the first three young females took up their new hobby. Why they developed a taste for nibbling and ramming the rudders of the targeted boats remains a mystery. Other killer whales joined them. It seems to have become a favourite game for them. They are not after humans. It is fairly certain that even if a crew member were to go overboard, there would be nothing to fear from the whales.

There are only about 50 killer whales and not all of them take part in the shenanigans. Those who have a taste for it will probably not be deterred, just as we are reluctant to give up what we enjoy.

From the perspective of us humans, there would be enough reasons for the killer whales to be stressed: We have polluted their habitat with noise, we have overfished their most important food source in the Strait of Gibraltar, tuna, and outlawed drift nets still pose a danger to them and especially to their calves.

To date there have been several hundred interactions with orca's and many boats have had to be towed into harbour afterwards. We have been confronted with such boats on several occasions and have been able to talk to those affected. So far, two ships have probably sunk due to the lost rudders and the associated water ingress on these ships. To my knowledge, however, there have been no fatalities or injuries so far.

Recording all interactions and sightings has proven to be the most successful strategy to date. As a result, we now not only check the weather forecast in the morning, but also where the orca's are currently enjoying themselves and adjust our route accordingly.

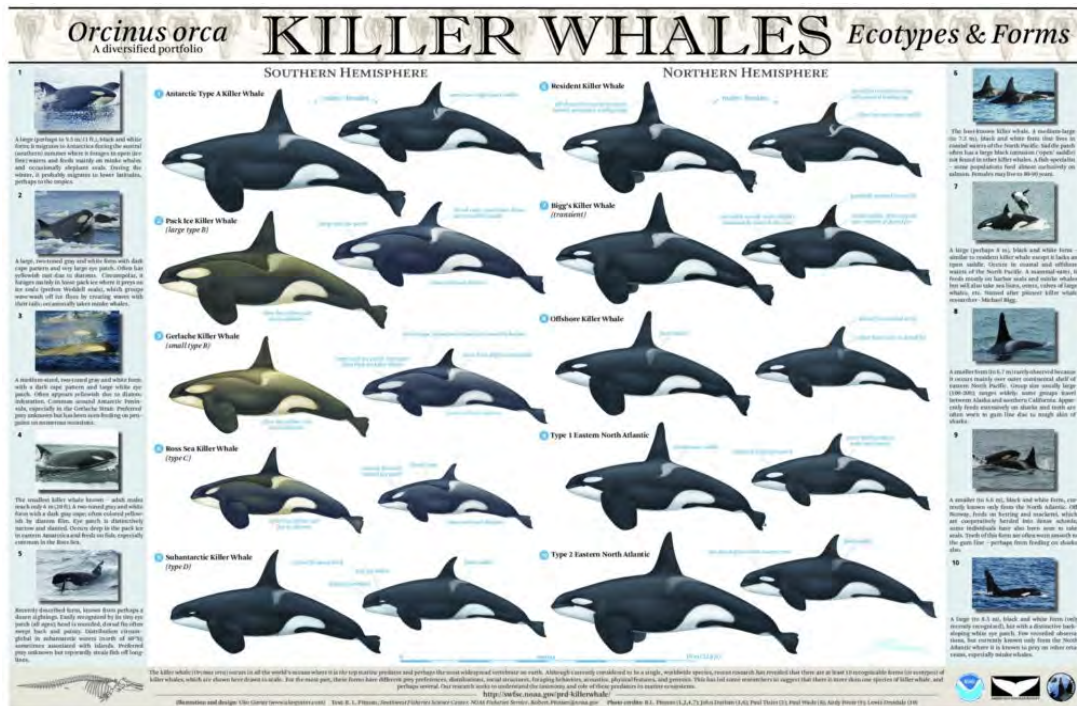
We believe that instead of conjuring up the devil and proposing draconian measures to get rid of them, as some social networks do, we should learn to live with it and avoid the killer whales. To this day, there are many constructive and destructive suggestions on how to protect oneself. From scattering petards over sand, bringing diesel overboard or dragging all sorts of things behind you.

We bought a 2 metre long iron pipe that we could hang on the railing and hit it with a hammer. Unfortunately, we don't know whether this noise will scare the orcas away or make them even more curious, and the whale experts I've consulted can't agree on this either. But at best it's worth a try!

For the time being, however, we try to avoid the affected areas as much as possible!  
Best wishes from the currently orca-free area around Porto!



# Some more about Orca's



A little more information about the orca's, as this newsletter has attracted a lot of attention and questions have been raised. Orca, orcinus, killer whale, killer whale, free willy, keiko... all are different names for the same animal. Because of their contrasting black and white colouring, they are among the best known whales/dolphins (note: every dolphin is a whale, but not every whale is a dolphin). Orcas grow up to 8 m long and are at the top of the food chain, which means they have no natural predators. They are able to attack and kill white sharks and large sperm whales, usually targeting the nutrient-rich liver. They are known to hunt very intelligently and in coordinated groups. Orcas are found in all oceans, both in coastal and offshore waters, and are the most widespread species of whale. However, there are different populations, each with their own diet, behaviour, habitat and social structure. Interestingly, the social structure is matrilineal, with groups organised around a female matriarch and all her offspring. The cultural significance of these beautiful animals ranges from traditional worship by North American Indians to today's controversial keeping in dolphinarium (see also Free Willy) and individual animals can be precisely identified by their dorsal fins (up to 1.8 metres in males, much smaller and curved in females). The average life expectancy of cows is around 50 years, but in exceptional cases this can rise to 80-90 years. Bulls, on the other hand, have an average life expectancy of around 30 years and live to a maximum of 60 years. Incidentally, there are hardly any known attacks by orca's on humans... except by orca's in captivity!

# The Wave of Nazaré



Nazaré used to be a small, tranquil fishing village on the Portuguese Atlantic coast. The old part of the town lies on an imposing rocky plateau, where the inhabitants were able to protect themselves from pirates.

Today, the modern district of Nazaré and a well-protected sandy beach, which helped Nazaré to develop into a tourist and holiday centre, are protected by the rocky plateau. At the top of the 100 metre high rocky plateau is one of the most important Portuguese pilgrimage sites with the shrine of "Our Lady of Nazareth". There are also numerous Unesco World Heritage Sites in the surrounding area, such as the monastery of Alcobaca, Batalha and the pilgrimage site of Fatima.

More recently, Nazaré has developed into a Mecca for big wave surfers, as there is a canyon off the coast that is around 200 kilometres long, 5000 metres deep and rises sharply towards the surface. This leads to so-called monster waves of 30 metres in height, especially in the winter months, with the right wind conditions and the right tide timing. These are said to be the world's highest waves and attract the supercracks of the bigwave surfing scene to indulge in their sport.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mT0DzAY7dQ>

Even with much smaller waves, the lighthouse near Nazaré is a magical and

spectacular place with a great view of the beautiful sandy beaches and the rocks off the coast.

There is a small museum in the lighthouse house with lots of pictures, surfboards and stories about this spectacular young sport.

If the bigwave is still too easy for you to surf, you can, like Nuno Santos, take your violin with you and play it while you surf. This doesn't really seem like something the world has been waiting for...

Nuno Santos: [https://youtu.be/IWr8-1IsU-c?si=AYXm7ImfdM\\_8m-eG](https://youtu.be/IWr8-1IsU-c?si=AYXm7ImfdM_8m-eG)

With best regards from Nazaré

Lukas and Mayumi

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Newsletter 18, 27.9.2023

## Landfall in Porto Santo



*Der Strand von Porto Santo*

In Lisbon, we (Mayumi, Markus, Susanne and Lukas) replenished our supplies for another 2 weeks and then sailed 30 miles south into the bay of Sines (the birthplace of Vasco da Gama). The next morning the wind forecast was perfect for setting off towards Madeira (approx. 500 nm = 1000 km). Constant light winds from astern are forecast for the next five days! After two days, life on board has levelled out and we have definitely left the orca area behind us.... Mayumi always provides the perfect food with sushi poke bowls, gratin, stroganoff... and that ensures a good mood. The only thing I failed at was the fishing... No real fish wanted to bite!!! We sailed at a constant speed of 3-5 knots towards Porto Santo. During the day we usually set our spinnaker and at night we sail under genoa. Once we used our generator to recharge the

batteries for our autopilot and to top up our water supply with our desalination system. During the night watch, we marvelled at the unspeakably beautiful night sky, which was undisturbed by any extraneous light - simply fantastic! Apart from a few cargo ships, there is nothing to see! Just blue water with a large Atlantic swell that gently lulls you to sleep again and again!

We read a lot and enjoy the internet-free time and the delicious food. We regularly check all the possible places of shame and the weather forecasts via our satellite connection. On the fifth day in the morning, the silhouette of Porto Santo suddenly appears - an island 30 nautical miles off the coast of Madeira... As the wind then became a little weaker, it took us until the evening to reach the island and anchor off the 9 km long golden sandy beach in the turquoise blue water! Porto Santo is characterised by its beautiful but very barren nature with lots of volcanic rock. The completely oversized runway at the airport is somewhat special. Apparently, this runway was used by NASA as an alternative landing site for its space shuttle. The two large white spheres on the hills around the airfield are also striking. These are presumably differential GPS antennas, which are required for the precise landing of a shuttle.

Porto Santo is famous because Christopher Columbus once lived here (the house can be visited) to plan his great voyages. We enjoy the fantastic landscapes in a hire car - very different and much warmer than in Scotland! ... and in the haze 30 nm further on, the main island of Madeira is already visible on the horizon!

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Newsletter 19, 2023 8.10.2023

## Madeira—more than a flower Island!



*Levada*

Madeira is an extremely exciting place with lots of nature. We have the unique opportunity to park our boat under the runway of Cristiano Ronaldo Airport (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CyGwpHlqgn6/>) for the next few months. This means it is well protected from rain and sunlight. Experienced mechanics will professionally take care of some repairs and maintenance work. Now that we have tidied up and cleaned everything, we enjoy the opportunity to explore the island.

On the one hand, there are the numerous hiking trails along the levadas (water channels - similar to the Suonen in Valais). Although it is not spring, numerous flowers are still in bloom. We are also amazed at how much muscle work goes into the banana harvest.

We are impressed by the rugged volcanic landscape with many steep slopes, deep gorges and mountains up to 1800 metres.

The entire road infrastructure has been greatly expanded in recent years with the support of the EU. You often have the feeling of driving through Emmental cheese. There are more than 150 tunnels on this island of 700 km<sup>2</sup> (it feels like there are many more). Converted to the area of Switzerland, that would be 9000 tunnels! In reality, there are fewer than 2000 in Switzerland, making Madeira the world record holder for the number of tunnels/km<sup>2</sup>.

Madeira is therefore not only a great place for flower lovers, but also for tunnelling and civil engineering fetishists.

Unfortunately, there is hardly any public transport, so almost all tourists drive back and forth on the island in hire cars... but thanks to the endless number of roads up to the highest mountains, this hardly leads to traffic chaos. Only the car parks in the towns are somewhat limited!

We are now looking forward to returning to Switzerland on Tuesday and meeting you in person again soon!

Thank you very much for your interest, comments and support!  
Lukas and Mayumi