

Aldebaran

Sailing Circumnavigation

La Coruna to Bayona

Report 3

It is claimed that Spain's nicest cruising area are the Rias between La Coruna and Bayona on it's northwest coast. After weeks cruising there we agree.

La Coruna to Bayona

Firstly, in our last report I mentioned my seasickness, this was a mistake as the number of suggestions received from you astonished me, especially the suggestion to eat boiled rice as it did not make such a mess on the deck.

Our last report concluded on arrival in La Coruna, well we spent six days there, the last two due to bad weather. We again met the Irish lads David Johnston and Daragh Connolly in the Warrior 35 "MAUD", we had first met them in Plymouth and subsequently in L'Aberwrach.

The four days in La Coruna were most enjoyable. We attended open-air concerts in the huge Maria Pita Square. A concert with a full Galician Orchestra conducted by Ron Goodwin of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra was excellent especially when he concluded with a selection of Frank Sinatra numbers. Another evening we walked to and climbed the "Tower of Hercules". It is the oldest working lighthouse in the world, with over one thousand eight hundred years of documented history and stands at the entrance to the Ria (bay) and port of La Coruna. On the Saturday night, from our cockpit we had a front seat view of the biggest and best fireworks display we have ever seen, they were exploding directly above us in the marina.

Prior to rounding Cape Finisterre on Thursday 26th Aug. we visited Camarinas where we berthed at the Real Club Nautico pontoon. The next night we anchored in an isolated small bay where we walked the beach and had our first swim of the voyage, it was freezing.

On rounding Finisterre in calm weather, we anchored at Muros, from where we departed last year to cross Biscay on our journey home from Majorca where we had bought ALDEBARAN. We had only set the anchor when a dinghy came out from shore with one of the occupants waving and calling us. It was Jim Molohan from Malahide who from his "Penthouse Apartment" in a waterfront hotel overlooking the anchorage saw us come in. I do not know which of us was most surprised, but it was great to see him. The following morning we had coffee with Jim and Rosemary while catching up on home gossip. Muros, a picturesque old fishing town with colonnaded pavements, narrow streets, and covered and open air markets. It has long been popular with cruising yachtsmen due to both its atmosphere and its facilities.

Our friends Ted and Di Dalton from England in their boat Belle Epoque whom we first met on arrival in Spain at Ribadeo were celebrating their 33rd wedding anniversary, a rare achievement in this cruising scene, on Friday 27th August. To mark the occasion we had a most pleasant evening beginning with drinks aboard Belle Epoque while watching a magnificent display by a school of dolphins throughout the anchorage. This was followed by an excellent meal ashore in the same hotel that Jim and Rosemary were staying. Unfortunately, while boarding their dinghy after the meal, poor Di misjudged the ever expanding gap between it and the slip resulting in her going for a swim in all her finery. All outward expressions of laughter were wisely postponed, until, with a new dawn, a night's sleep and dry cloths the incident was discussable.

Sunday 29th August saw us emerge from Ria de Muros and enter Ria de Arosa, the largest and perhaps most attractive for cruising with many pleasant anchorages to explore. Our first anchorage here was N.W. of San Julian where we met "Caprice" from Dun Laoire, owned by Bruce Lyster but with his son aboard. He told us Bruce was coming out to Bayona on 11th September and would take our post out. We spent five days cruising the Ria during which we met, among other boats, Bob and Judy Bailey, Americans in their boat "Pooh Bear". On hearing we were from Howth they recalled that two of their friends spent last winter there and spoke very highly of it. They were surprised when I suggested their names were Charlie and Barbara Todd in "Sayonara".

Our next Ria to visit was Pontevedra where we spent two nights anchored in the lee of Isla Tambo from where we took the dinghy ashore to Combarro. It is a small fishing village where the stone houses with balconies supported by pillars crowd onto narrow flagged passages with Galician maize stores crammed in between.

Sangenjo with its 3-month-old superb and very expensive marina (£24 per night) was our last port in the Ria. Luckily we went in early in the morning and did not leave till late the following afternoon during which time we washed and cleaned the boat and painted tri-colours on our dinghy, which we now call "Little Star", "Aldebaran" is the name of a navigation star.

Prior to arriving in Vigo on Wednesday 8th Sept. we spent a night anchored in a small bay in Ria de Aldan accompanied by "Pooh Bear". We walked the beach and rocks prior to boarding Pooh Bear for "refreshments". This was one of the nicest anchorages to date and for those interested our position was 42°17.6'N and 8°50.7'W..

Vigo, despite being a busy port and city was a pleasant surprise and we were able to get a number of items we had been looking for. I spent Thursday morning changing the oil in the generator. This necessitated removing everything from the aft locker, rigging a tent to give me protection from the sun while working and then when the job was completed, putting everything back.

Thursday and Friday nights were spent anchored beyond the suspension bridge in Ensenada de San Simon at the head of Ria de Vigo with "Pooh Bear" and "Skittles" an English boat who we first met in Ria de Arosa. On Friday morning we went ashore in "Little Star" (L/S) to the village of Cesantes where we encountered heavy and very noisy traffic while trying to cross a main road. We all agreed that the tranquillity of life on our boats was priceless.

On Saturday 11th Sept. we finally reached Bayona, four weeks after arriving in Spain. With no room in the marina we anchored in the bay with many other boats. However, prior to setting our anchor we rafted alongside "Duchess" a Moody Carbineer (13.39m) sailed by Chris and Kathy Dennison and son Alex from England. We had spoken to them for the first time on the SSB (single side band) radio on 17th August while they were in L'aberwrach, Brittany waiting to cross Biscay and we were in Northern Spain. Having spoken to them on a regular basis most mornings at 0800 GMT on the ARC radio net it was nice to talk face to face.

To date, either on the radio net or on passage we have directly or indirectly made contact with almost 30 of the now 250 boat record ARC entry.

We collected our mail last night from Bruce Lyster who had just arrived from Dublin. It really is a highlight of the cruising life when you receive mail etc. from home. Our picture on the cover of Ireland's sailing magazine AFLOAT together with the inside article and the article in the Howth Y. C. newsletter Tidal Chat were immediately read and much enjoyed. Also the letters and photographs were much appreciated. Keep them coming through Dinghy Supplies, 46 Dublin Road, Sutton, Dublin 13. Ph 8322312 or fax 8322756. Our next collection point we hope will be Lagos in Southern Portugal.

Our trip so far has been very enjoyable and each day seems to get better, the social life is hectic, what with us visiting boats and they visiting us we do not have any free nights. We could do with a social secretary, who could also control our alcoholic intake, any applicants.

Finally, some statistics since leaving Ireland; nights at sea = 4, at anchor = 17, on buoys = 3, at harbour walls = 5, at marinas/pontoons = 21 (inc. 8 at Plymouth and 6 at La Coruna), total = 50.

Regards

Pat & Olivia

Yacht Aldebaran

Bayona, Spain.

13th September 1999