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CANANZ

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CANANZ CRUISING THIS SUMMER

The Committee are planning more cruising for members this summer. The first cruise will be our annual Kowhai Cruise on Saturday 4 October. We will also arrange a cruise for Labour Weekend, 25-27 October with a destination. We are planning more cruises after Christmas when we see how these go.

The big change is that we are not specifying destinations at this stage. We think it will be better to monitor the weather during the week before the cruise and advise members of the destination by email. This lets us select a sheltered bay in the Gulf that will provide a calm, comfortable anchorage, and a good beach for holding the BBQ and other activities.

We will email on the Tuesday before, the likely destination and on Friday, confirm it with another email. We hope that this will give us all more enjoyable sailing.

We will be looking to only go to more distant destinations such as Mahurangi, Kawau and Te Kouma if there is likely to be good wind for easy sailing both to and from these places.

Stephen Plank and Ross Davenport are working on some ideas to add interest to sailing to the destination, including Treasure Hunts, Navigational Exercises and maybe, a Poker Run. It will be next year before these plans will be ready.

We look forward to catching up on the water - mark the dates in your calendar now.

NEXT MEETING

The next member's meeting is at Richmond Yacht Club at 7:30pm Monday 13 October. This will be a forum on Sailing Tips with participants :

- Paul Leppington (lecturer at NZ Maritime school ex Senior Master/Director of Spirit of Adventure Trust)
- Tony Whiting, Basil Orr and Bob McDavitt to forum to discuss weather, boat set-up, passage planning and emergency tools.

There will also be a hand-out available for those attending.

LOST AND FOUND IN NORWAY

FROM JIM AND KARIN LOTT ON VICTORIA

A fair breeze carried us towards the Shetland Islands. We could recall little about this remote archipelago in the North Sea, aside from Shetland ponies. Our education started just as we were tying up at the city dock with a friendly visit from fellow Royal Cruising Club member Leslie Irvine, a local businessman whose wife is a Kiwi. He later took us on a tour of the island and gave us lots of advice about local sailing conditions.

There are at least 30 New Zealanders living in the Shetlands with two of our prime ministers, Robert Stout and Helen Clarke originating from the islands. There are also many other Shetlanders who have come to New Zealand to live.



Oil from the vast North Sea fields, which lie half way between Scotland and Norway is piped ashore to refineries and tankers bringing prosperity and work. There are still plenty of sheep in the countryside, but the small local fishing boats, formerly the mainstay of the economy, have been replaced by a few large fishing ships, just like the rest of the world.

The fresh headwinds that delayed our departure for Norway turned out to be a blessing as we met more and more people in the vibrant town and had a chance to explore the countryside in a lovely part of the world. The sunny, mild weather gave no hint of what it would be like in winter, but the few trees all stunted and bent told another story. Like much of coastal Europe, without the Gulf Stream and the warm water it brings, the land would be almost uninhabitable. At the weekend the yacht club hosted races and hundreds of visiting yachts come every year, including many Norwegians who stock up their yachts with duty-free whisky and wine delivered by the truckload.

We caught a bus to Sumburgh at the southern tip of the main island where the RAF and coastguard have a busy base near the local airport. Helicopters come and go at all hours and many hundreds who work in the oilfields arrive and depart. On the other side of the road, the remains of a castle attract tourists to a carefully preserved archaeological site at Jarlshof, dating back over 4000 years to the bronze age. Alongside the original round stone dwellings, oval shaped stone houses were built by the Vikings when they invaded several hundred years ago.

As well as English, there is a local dialect that seems to reflect the Gaelic-Norse tradition of the Shetlands (we could not understand a word). The islands lie along the tracks followed by seafarers for thousands of years and have a rich and complex heritage. At one time the Shetlands belonged to Denmark, but the



Danish King gave the Shetland Islands as a dowry when his daughter married a Scot. She must have been a troublesome teenager to pay that much to be rid of her!

During the war, the Norwegian-Shetland bond was reinforced by "The Shetland Bus" with Norwegian fishing boats carrying patriots escaping from the Nazis to safety and returning with arms, radio operators and infiltrators who were actively resisting the German invaders. Many lost their lives, with the memorial on the waterfront at Scalloway a poignant reminder.

When we left New Zealand in 2011, there were really only two "must visit" places in our plans: the Beagle Canal in Chile and Ålesund on the west coast of Norway where Karin has her family roots. Karin's maternal grandfather, Anton Alvestad was a stalwart of the town being its mayor for a time, then the city manager for two decades. He also was a member of Norway's parliament for many years and a government minister for a short time. He was strongly socialist and committed to the temperance movement, but this did not stop us from toasting him more than once with aquavit.

Ålesund is a very pretty town with its art nouveau architecture on many post-cards. It was rebuilt in stone and brick after 2/3 of the wooden buildings were lost in a fire in 1904 when Karin's grandfather was training to become a baker. So we wanted to find out as much as possible about her family and as soon as we arrived, Karin's cousin Else and her husband Per Erik drove from Oslo to help in our search.



The newspaper for this part of Norway arrived to take photos of the family from afar that had come by yacht to look up ancestors in the city archives and they published a two page spread. Per Erik managed to gain us entry into the council library to take some photos and we wandered the streets looking up old addresses. The corner where Anton had his bakery business has become something of a 'baker's delight', with bread rolls replaced by Thai massages..... So there are still tarts for sale. Decades ago Karin met her grandmother; a serious lady who would not have been amused. We stood together blocking the raunchy portrait in the window as the reporter took some family shots for the newspaper.

The Shetland "bus" fishing boat voyages centred on Ålesund and the many islands nearby. It was to this area that the Norwegian royal family fled, taking the country's gold reserves with them in the face of the invading Nazis who were held back briefly by defence forces. Later they were evacuated to Britain. Anton was imprisoned by the Nazis for his part in helping them at the time.

And so began our travels in Norway seeking family history and visiting the country where Karin's mother grew up. Sadly she died suddenly when Karin was just eight and she has little memory of her early life. We have always felt a special bond with Norway and our many wonderful friends and relatives there, whom we were soon to catch up with.

Planning a route through the thousands of islands along the coast took time, but it's possible to travel along most of the coastline in sheltered water. In places the deep fjords cut inland for hundreds of kilometres, in other parts the islands and rocky islets are low. Passages between

are narrow with some closed off by bridges, but mostly the country is linked by a vast network of tunnels under fjords or through mountains. New Zealanders love Milford Sound, a scene repeated again and again in Norway. We visited many little towns along the way with small clusters of pretty houses perched on rocky slopes. In the south, the grandeur of the fjords diminishes to lower mountains, but the chains of islands and narrow passages seem to multiply and it is very easy to get lost. But with the help of electronic charts we managed to find our way through the vast array of rocky channels hardly wider than the boat.



The number of launches and yachts has grown hugely in the past few years along with many hundreds of small marinas and private docks. But there are so many places and so much room that the development is hardly noticeable. To our surprise, Norway is nothing like as expensive as we expected. Setting aside alcohol whose tax makes it about four times more expensive than in NZ and meat, which is very pricey too, our grocery bills were much the same as home with diesel fuel a bit cheaper. It's probably a reflection of costs in New Zealand and our high dollar more than anything else, but it suits us very nicely in our travels.

Books on Norway describe the area around Bergen as the wettest, with rain on three days out of four but it was sunny almost every day of our voyage through the islands and fjords. We were told time and again that this was most unusual and the Norwegian meteorological service recorded the sunniest July for over 60 years.

It was a pleasure to catch up with Cate who was one of two Norwegian girls (we describe them as our Norwegian "daughters") who sailed with us on *Victoria* from the Caribbean to New Zealand in 1995. We have stayed in touch over the years and we rafted alongside Cate and her family when they were on holiday in their yacht.

Our arrival in Bergen was the day before the Tall Ships called during their race. Sailing ships from all over the world regularly have a regatta where they travel from port to port, normally in Europe. This year over 50 visited Bergen and we watched the massive *Kruzenshtern* being assisted into the tiny inner harbour. She is a 4-masted barque originally called *Padua* and is a close sister to the *Peking*. The port was overflowing with tourists from



many countries and several cruise ships. Roads downtown were sealed off, music played and cruising yachts like us had to move to another part of the city a mile away. It is a pity New Zealand is so far away and *Spirit of New Zealand* cannot take part, but just being there at the right time was a huge pleasure.

Bergen also brought us one very challenging day in which Jim spent some hours at the police



station. We discovered that two inflatable lifejackets had been stolen from the cockpit along with a device we call 'millie'. Millie is a powerful battery operated electric angle-drill (Milwaukee brand, hence millie), which we use as a winch handle. With it, Karin can hoist me to the masthead with ease, and with our shoulders and backs well worn, winching sails causes some trouble. So millie is a very important tool for us, but little use to anyone else. Replacement outside the USA is not easily achieved and the cost horrendous. Armed with a picture of millie, we headed to the police station to report the theft where a helpful policeman took details and said he hoped it might turn up.

My sister, Mary was coming from New Zealand to join us for a few weeks. She spent a couple of days in Oslo hosted by Else and Per Erik before catching the train to Bergen where we would meet her in the evening. But there was no sign of her on the train. Police at the railway station helped us contact Per Erik who definitely said she was on the bus that linked to the train from Oslo to Bergen. The police also talked with Norway Rail who had no answers, so it was back to the police station where I added Mary's name to the lost millie and the lifejackets. The same policeman I saw in the morning was again helpful, but he looked at me rather thoughtfully.

At about 11pm, having walked between the boat, the rail station and police station a couple of times, we finally found Mary. She had arrived over 3 hours late after travelling on two buses. We later discovered that the rail company had over-booked and did not have sufficient carriages, but they overlooked telling the station in Bergen or anyone else.

We roamed central Bergen and the old Hanseatic part of the city with its wooden buildings aged by centuries all askew and leaning on each other for support. The wooden walkways that wind through the buildings are all worn and uneven. Across the road the tall ships filled the dock with some rafted together as thousands of visitors jockeyed for positions to take photographs of the colourful scene. Stalls and booths sold t-shirts, posters, ice



cream and candy as bands played sea-shanties and launches packed on board guests to see the spectacle from the water.

Next morning, in a scene similar to Auckland during the Americas Cup, we watched and photographed the ships as they passed us in the channel before we continued our voyage south through yet more islands and fjords. In Lysefjord, we particularly wanted to have a look at the famous Preikestolen (pulpit rock) where many tourists visit. It is a rocky outcrop 600metres above the fjord. We could just make out the tiny figures against the blue sky standing on the ledge high above. We could have easily spent another month in the spectacular and majestic Norwegian fjords.

Stavanger marks the southern end of the fjords and also the sheltered inner channels, but the sunny days and windless weather provided a glassy calm on the coast as we headed to Kristiansand, the southernmost city. Here we met with more of our family not seen since we came here to Katrine's wedding a decade ago. Katrine and her husband, Egil Andre now have three delightful daughters and we invited them all to lunch on board next day, along with Katrine's parents, Vera and Bjørn, who is Karin's cousin.

Our arrival at Kristiansand coincided with a change from calms to a gale forecast and by the time the adults and children arrived for lunch, we had moored bow-on to the floating dock in the face of the rising swells. Long before lunch, faces started to take on a greenish hue and with the dock leaping about more than *Victoria*, we bundled some of our guests into the dinghy to get them safely ashore. Just three boats remained at the dock with multiple head-ropes and stern lines to mooring buoys. The arrival of another yacht saw Jim and other crew from the boats on the dock to handle lines. It was quite a task with a bollard being torn from the dock and the line handlers drenched by waves breaking a metre over the dock in 40 knot winds.



With the front past, next morning we were able to take our family for a delightful day trip to a lovely anchorage, swimming in the 20 deg water, and the children having great fun crawling and chasing each other over bunks and up and down hatches with squeals of delight. Another gale was imminent and we scuttled away to shelter in a tiny fjord behind groups of rocks, where we found a space at a sheltered dock. A 40 metre fishing boat protected us from the wind to some degree. Her bow was a half metre from our stern and our keel was in the sand, but the shelter was perfect as we watched the waves tumbling over the islets and lighthouse two hundred metres away and spray filled the sky.

As we cruised the villages dotted among the islets passing through rocky channels with sometimes just a metre each side of us, Karin kept wanting to stop and buy one of the maroon and white cottages with its own dock that are so characteristic of Norway. Too soon it was back to Kristiansand where Katrine kindly lent us her car to drive the 6 hours to the airport and farewell Mary. This gave us an opportunity to enjoy more time with our family in Oslo but sadly,

Per Erik was laid up needing many weeks to recover before he will be able to walk again. So the discussion centred on ladders, roofs, and how long broken bones take to mend when we get to retirement age. But of course, we all believe such a thing will never happen to us.



We also had the great good fortune to receive an email from our friendly policeman in Bergen. They had found the missing

millie. He promptly dispatched the much needed device to Oslo for us to pick up. We talked about the Norwegian police efficiency as we headed to Grimstad to meet another of Karin's cousins, whom we had met just once before. Grandfather Anton had nine children so Karin has a large family in Norway.

Eli kindly took a day off work to drive us around and told us a great deal more about the family history and Anton. She gave us copies of many family photos going back over a century that Karin had never seen.

When we arrived in Norway it never really got dark at night, but by now the days were quickly drawing in and the weather was not as sunny either. We had seen and done so much, but at the same time seen so little in our seven weeks there. But we had a last call to make to a pretty town called Arendal to see our friend Therese, our other Norwegian "daughter". Therese is now on her own, working and bringing up three young children who are a delight. So we reminisced over too much



wine as we told tall stories and yarns about life on *Victoria* in 1995 as we crossed the Pacific 20 years ago.

It was hard dropping the lines and heading away from Norway where we had received the most wonderful hospitality, have so many ties and where we feel so much at home.

UPDATE FROM TERRY STREET & ANDREA BOYD

We arrived in the beautiful small town of Le Grazie a week ago, and rounding the headland into the harbour were confronted by the largest collection of classic yachts we have seen anywhere in our travels.

These were not here for a regatta. This, apparently is their home. As we sit at anchor, to our starboard side is the magnificent 'Lulworth' (pictured) built in 1920 as a British Big Class yacht and which boasts the largest wooden mast in the world (imagine all the varnishing!).

Off our bow is the 1910 Charles Nicholson designed 'Orion' built by Camper-Nicholson for the Spanish royal family. In all, there are over 20 examples of magnificently restored classic boats here.

Shortly we will end our six years of cruising in the Mediterranean and depart for Genoa, where we will load Argonauta at the end of September onto a Seven Seas vessel to ship her home to New Zealand.

After 17 years aboard we look forward to summer cruising in the Gulf and hope to see you all at the next Kowhai Cruise.

