

## Voyage with Silmaril 2009

### 3rd Report: 10 July to 18 September 2009 from Tromsø 69°39.0N 18°57.6E to Svolvær 68° 14'.4N, 14°34'.4E

After the days in the harbor, we left Tromsø on Friday, 10 July, just the two of us. And we enjoyed a lovely day of sailing despite the wind for ever on the nose. The wind follows the fjords just as we do, therefore we very often were obliged to tack close-hauled even after a drastic change in direction. In Hamneset they knew already that we would arrive, somebody had followed our course on the west side of the island and had expected us to come into the harbor. The authorities have begun to add a few guest places at the new pontoons behind the old piers of the fishing fleet. Everybody was helpful and eager to accommodate us. We were even offered fresh fish. Unfortunately we had bought fish before leaving Tromsø and we had to refuse the kind gift.

The next day the weather was milder, the temperature climbed from rain jacket to t-shirt degrees.



We wanted to see the glacier in Jøkelfjord. It almost reaches the water and lays way back in a very narrow fjord.



What breath-taking landscapes and wondrous clouds we saw on our way!



After our visit close to the glacier we sailed half way out of the fjord and dropped anchor in the lovely bay of Skalsabukta.

The music of the little stream accompanied our dreams after a great dinner of freshly caught cod.

Sunday, 12 July was a warm day. We even took a bath in the morning . . .



. . . and sat at the breakfast table in real summer attire!



Before we left Jøkelfjord, we retraced our course to the glacier in glorious weather.



Our next port of call was the small but busy little town of Skjervøy. We did sail, but tacked assiduously. It was very warm. On our hike up the hill to the store we both took off our jackets. On Monday we actually sailed again, about half the time on our way to the oldest trading post in Norway, Havnes. We made fast at the tall pier of the fish factory right in front of the large store house full of dried cod.

The house still belongs to the founding family, Giaever, and the village is prospering with the help of many members of this same family. It is a lovely place. The young wife of the present boss is in charge of the old store that still carries all kinds of basic food stuff and some souvenirs. She is a hobby photographer and showed us some very fine pictures of hers.





We had a fantastic view from our mooring across the fjord to the Lyngen Alps. And that's what I saw looking out of the window at low tide:



Late at night the water around Silmaril suddenly boiled.



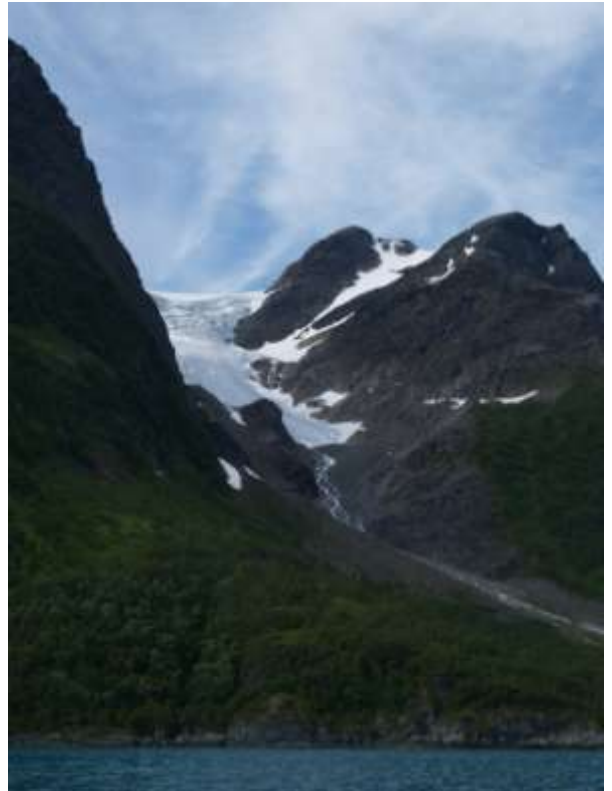
Alex whipped out the rod and dropped the hook from the pier immediately and promptly caught four cods briefly before midnight. The largest was too big for the rod and its weight broke off the tip.



Tuesday was one of the greatest sailing days on our trip north. With the Lyngen Alps in front of us we sailed at top speed from Havnes across the Lyngen Fjord very close to the cliffs of those beautiful mountains.



Alex was busy trimming the genoa to perfect performance and Silmaril sped on with up to over 8 knots toward the steep rock faces and glacier snouts (?).



As we reached the end of the fjord, the wind blew even stronger and we tried in vain to go into the small harbor of Nordeider. The pier is in such bad shape that we did not dare make fast for a night with lots of wind. And the pontoon looked rickety as well and was obviously constructed for small motor boats with almost no draught at all. We left again in the direction of Tromsø. We tried to find a sheltered place to drop anchor between the small islands near Finnkroken. Here as well we did not stay. The islands' elevations are not high enough to offer shelter from strong winds and there were too many shallow spots in the narrow passages. Finally we anchored in a very small bay in Grøtsund. The bay was too small for a comfortable night at anchor with enough swinging room. So, we ate the cod filets and left again for Tromsø. Shortly before 0100 we entered our old berth stern first with no problem.

On Wednesday, 15 July we scrubbed Silmaril thoroughly, since we expected our German friends from Wedel, Ingird and Achim, to arrive at 9 p.m. for a two week trip with us.

Thursday, 16 July. We planned to reach Sommarøy today. The trip called for careful navigation, especially the approaches to the harbor, since the entire region around the place is very shallow and full of rocks and small islands. After Rysstraumen, the narrow passage with strong currents south of Tromsø, we stopped to fish, since our neighbors at the jetty yesterday, the Danish couple with the Najad, waved their fishing rod suggestively. But no luck, we never even saw a fish. During the remaining trip we were kept busy by dozens of nautical marks, a persecuting ferry with unknown destination and a police boat. But neither the ferry nor the police came close enough to worry.



And Achim experienced his first try at the helm. The entrance to the harbor was very well marked and after careful investigation of all mooring options we found a comfortable possibility at the end of a pontoon.

Sommarøy has a peculiar tourist attraction: it is a fishing paradise with all the facilities required, lodging, motor boats, tackle, a service hut with a professional "slaughterhouse" and showers. A few Germans were there. They catch loads of saithe every day, all of them about 70cm long. The beasts are cleaned and prepared to be frozen for the trip home. The Norwegians allow 15 kg of filet per person to be exported. Achim and Alex

received one from a German couple who had caught already too many fish, but could not stop having fun! We made it into a scrumptious dinner right away.



Before the great meal we climbed the mountain behind the harbor on a typical path Norwegian style: very steep and over slick rock. All four of us were grateful for the "hand rails". At the top of the 211m tall hill we absorbed the view, the many bizarre rock formations and the peace and quiet





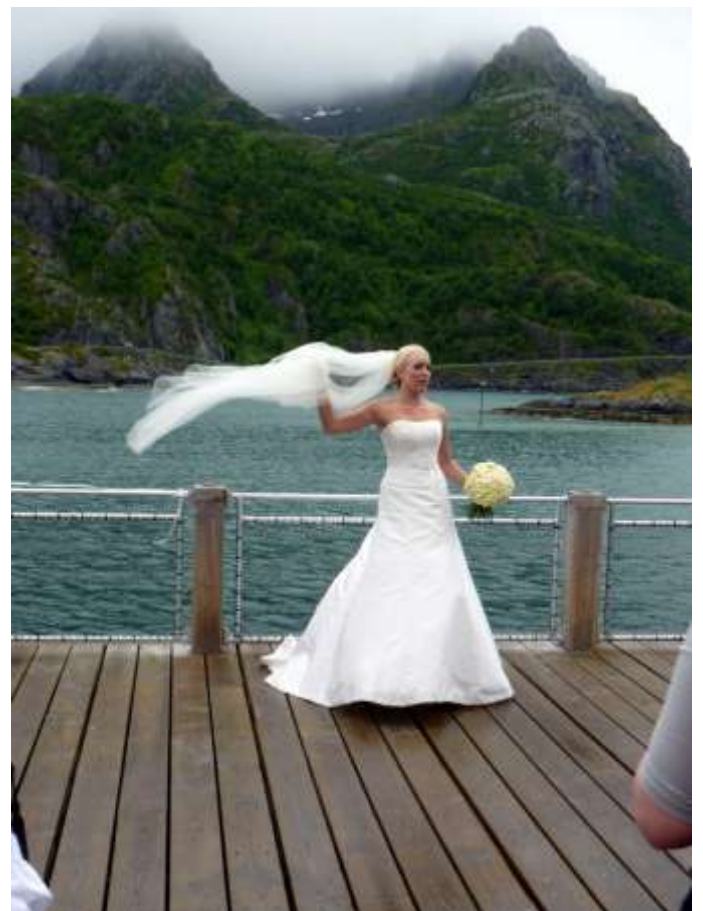
Back on sea level we enjoyed the midnight light in the harbor and the surrounding little bays.

Next day we wanted to visit Hamn, the pearl of Senja, as the harbor guide states. The weather was awful. The steady 15 to 20 knots wind straight on our nose and the steep and rather tall waves forced us to change course in the shallow and rocky waters. Alex thought we might be able to land on the island Hekkingen, but try as we might we never spotted a safe place to anchor let alone a pier or jetty. After a long and wet trip into the Øyfjord we approached Husøy in pelting rain and very violent falling winds and found shelter deep in the harbor. Behind the tall mole we lay in quiet water at a pontoon. We even received a power connection after a phone call. In the small café we revived our spirits with hot chocolate. The night was quiet and we slept peacefully.

A light fog greeted us next morning, a novelty on this trip. We set out for Hamn on the west coast of Senja. The place was disappointing. The harbor guide describes it as an old romantic fishing village

protected by sheltering rocks. However, there is only a hotel in the well restored fishing huts and a rather rickety pontoon. The wind was so strong even in the harbor that we agreed with the other sailors to distribute the weight of our boats evenly to lighten the strain on the mooring chains.

The Norwegians obviously consider Hamn truly romantic: the entire hotel was reserved for a wedding. Despite the fierce wind and cold the wedding guests took loads of pictures of the bride and groom.



Eager to take many pictures, Achim stumbled, dropped his camera and sank the battery!

Sunday, 19 July. We leave Hamn in good weather. A last view of our mooring place in front the motorboat compensates for the foggy picture of yesterday.



The passage to Andenes at the northern tip of the island Andøya was uneventful, although Silmaril had to contend with 3m tall surge (? not sure!) and rocked us all the way across the open water.

We already knew the harbor from our trip with Nanny and Michael. But this time the harbor master was not insight and "our" slot at the pontoon was taken by a fishing vessel. So, after careful discussion we decided to maneuver Silmaril behind the pontoon and behind the fishing boat at its end.

There was little wind and backing up into the small slot should not be too difficult.

The entrance was very narrow, but with the most attentive help of Alex and Achim past the sharp edges and protruding metal pieces along the fishing boat, we made it with no mishap.

We undertook an extended walk through the village. The museum did not tempt us in such weather; we had seen a few with the same "content". But we enjoyed testing the installation outside of two bowls that conveyed our murmurs across a distance of 30m in very audible volume with no strings attached (in the true sense of the words).



Andenes is pretty large. It has a NATO airport and harbor. There are also a vast number of fishing vessels and pleasure boats. Tourists like to come here for whale watching. The monsters like to stay in deep water and near steep under water slopes. And there is such a place only 5nm from the shore, the so-called Bleik canyon.



Andenes has also an impressive lighthouse. Unfortunately it was closed. We would have immensely enjoyed the view. Our stroll through streets and gardens made up for the lack of view over interminable water. There was this hot tub heated with a wood stove, for example, . . .



. . . the many seagulls with their nests in the most improbable places or pretty old houses with turf roofs.



On the way we spoiled ourselves with hot chocolate on a sunny terrace and enjoyed just being here together.



On our way back to Silmaril we caught a glimpse along the bay out into the open waters to the east of the tip of the island.

After our tour through the village, Achim went to the jetty with the fishing rod. He wanted to test his luck after our reports on Michael's great catches. He did indeed catch a small, no, a tiny angler fish. The dead little guy gave him such a heart aches that he will never fish again to the end of his days.



With the almost daily game with or rather against Ingrid he certainly forgot his frustration.

Leaving next morning proved quite a challenge. There was much more wind than yesterday and our discussions of how to go about it took some time. Alex finally climbed aboard the fishing vessel in front of us and tied a long rope to its outer railing. With running motor, but no gas, Alex and Achim pulled Silmaril gently towards and out of the boats stern, carefully

watching the protruding aft crane. Once the bow was past the stern I was able to engage the engine and steer Silmaril out and along the other boat. The guys kept watch and pushed every obstacle out of the way. All four of us were mighty relieved when we headed out of the harbor.

We then followed one of the whale watching boats. Its captain had told Alex the approximate coordinates of a probable sighting. We were glad to be able to follow in its wake, since the shore is rocky and on this side of the harbor the markers stake out a complicated slalom. Silmaril with her 6 to 7 knots average speed took quite some time to reach the whale watcher at its destination. We stayed behind the large boat to keep well away of its sonar system.



But we only saw one whale blow and very briefly three dark backs, but not one fluke. We stayed and watched for a long time and remained there even after the whale watchers had left. But no luck, no more whales, only lots of dark fin-like waves and four pairs of strained eyes.

Alex proposed to sail south along the west side of the isle Andøya. The weather became rough and after discussing the great distance to the planned destination, Alex studied the charts and decided to try to enter the fishing port of Nordmela. The approach to the harbor led us incredibly close to innumerable rocks swathed in foam with the unceasing movement of the windswept waters. However, I have learned to trust unconditionally the rustiest nautical signs and, of course, Alex's navigational skills. We moored Silmaril along side a fishing vessel. The other options, very tall concrete piers with tire fenders, did not appeal to us at all. It is always tricky to tie up with a tidal ?? of 2 to 3 m.



The climb up to the deck of the fishing vessel was quite a challenge and the further climb up to the pier at low water a real test of courage and muscles for Ingrid and me.

Achim found a plug in an open fishing shed and provided electricity for Silmaril's low batteries. Later on our walk through the village we asked two women, where we could find the harbor master. They made several phone calls but no answers. Well, if the shed was open we shouldn't have qualms to use the free plug, no problem.



And so relieved we walked on passed the few pretty houses and the empty drying racks of the village.



Back on the pier Ingrid and I needed all the help from our men to get back on deck of Silmaril, since the water level was even lower now and the descent aboard even more scary.



Tuesday, 21 July. What a glorious day! We sailed passed all the rocks of the entrance to the harbor in much calmer weather.



Yes, sails are nicely trimmed . . .





. . . Achim took the helm and Ingrid kept an eye on all the birds, especially the funny puffins.



After peaceful hours of sailing we tied Silmaril at the concrete pier of the wharf in Alsvåg. Getting on land was again a daring climb. But we made it and went shopping in the nearby store.



Achim found a very large water hose and somehow fitted our small one to it successfully and filled up the tank.

The village is not very pretty, but harbors always enchant us and while Alex went fishing, the three of us strolled to the other side of the water.



We spotted a crazy racing boat and wondered who would own such a thing in such a small place. And there are rocks everywhere and not just in the harbors.



On Wednesday, 22 July the weather was finally perfect, almost clear sky, not so cold and good wind. I convinced Ingrid to take the helm. She did very well, although I could almost hear her heart pounding!



Hardly a mile out of the harbor we saw the round head of a seal peek out of the water several times. And many puffins took flight from Silmaril, frantically running across the water at top speed before flying off or diving. They are so funny!



Later on, Achim took over from Ingrid at the helm and between the two of them they sailed all the way to Finbugta near Risøyhamn, the anchoring place we had already used with Nanny and Michael, but then much farther back in the bay and in pouring rain.

Here we dropped anchor in beautiful weather and went ashore with the dinghy. To be on the safe side with the rising tide, Achim and Alex carried the rubber dinghy quite far inland.

and well kept gardens.



Our hike to the village led us over ragged mossy rocks and across the main road to some pretty houses. We saw many flowers





Silmaril peacefully waited for us.



Next morning we had to wait before the bridge of Risøyhamn for the Hurtigruten ship MS Trollfjord to land and take off again and allow our passage into the narrow channel of the Risøyrenna. This is a narrow passage, dug out of the very shallow waters between the surrounding islands. It is regularly dredged to guarantee the required depth for the draught of the Hurtigruten ships of about 5m.





Water and skies enchanted us  
time and again on our voyage.

Toward noon, a steady wind carried us among the many small islands in the vicinity of the bird cliff on Helløy. We intended to anchor in a quiet bay to eat lunch. But there was no place deep or shallow enough to anchor well away from the shore and while we sailed out of the maze of islands and rocks again, Ingrid had fried a sort of cereal "burgers" and served them on deck.

The bird cliff was again an impressive experience (we passed it the first time with Nanny and Michael on board some weeks ago). This time the young kittiwakes had hatched and looked at us with their black-circled eyes



The rock rises  
perpendicularly out of the  
water and I could bring  
Silmaril very close to the  
birds.

Both the noise and the smell  
were overpowering.

We proceeded to the old  
harbor on Bjarkøy, where we  
had already stayed over night  
with Nanny and Michael.

As we knew, there are perfect  
sanitary facilities in the new  
harbor about fifteen minutes  
away and we marched over  
there and all of us took long  
showers.

In the evening our neighbor from one of the motor boats on the pontoon brought us a wonderful fish dinner: cooked cod with its liver as an supplement. Very tasty! Alex involved the owner of the boat in a long discussion on fishing and I riddled his wife and his sister with questions of preparing the delicious food.

We decided to stay for another day, to the great delight of Ingrid and Achim. They took off to hike and collect mushrooms and berries. Alex and I accepted the invitation of our expert fisherman of the motor boat and his three crew members, his wife, his sister and her husband, to go out with him and catch fish. And what an experience this proved to be! In no time, we reached a favorable spot marked by a large flock of seagulls on the water. The boat's fish finder confirmed the fisherman's hunch; there were huge red spots on the screen, indicating fish. Alex dropped the heavy hook of the borrowed rod and sure enough, in about fifteen minutes he caught five large specimens in 60m depth.



There, something on the hook!

And here it is, a sizable cod.

Our fishing instructor cleaned and prepared the fish right there and then. He also kept the liver for us to prepare later with the fish. Ingrid and Achim came back with a number of mushrooms of the boletus kind and a bag full of blueberries. We enjoyed a real feast this evening.





On our hike we found no food, we "only" saw gorgeous trees, flowers and beautiful very old stone walls.



Next day, Saturday, 25 July, Ingrid and Achim already spent their last day on Silmaril.



Before we left the harbor, we absolutely had to rescue a huge jelly fish from two little boys vigorously pelting it with large stones. My little camera produced some very good pictures of the monster.

The beautiful beast saved, we leisurely sailed to Harstad and made fast at the last pontoon of the city harbor.

Sunday morning, we got up very early in order to accompany our friends to the MS Polarlys and to visit the ship. Shortly before its departure at 08:00 we left the MS Polarlys and waved to Ingrid and Achim for a long time.

We had spent lovely two weeks with our dear friends from Wedel.



The day was very warm, almost hot, as our neighbors impressively demonstrated. Such weather suggested laundry day. But since the condition of the tumbler at the kiosk definitely was above my accepted dirt level, we hung lines on deck Silmaril to the great surprise of inhabitants and passersby.



Later in the afternoon, Alex hoisted our folding bikes out of Silmaril's aft locker and we visited the famous medieval church a little outside of Harstad. Unfortunately the church was closed, but its windows and doors yielded nice pictures.



Back in the harbor, we met a Swiss in a motor boat, who told us a scary story about an English couple who had to pay an exorbitant amount of taxes to release their yacht from the chains that tied it to the pier after their return. We were not amused!!



The vehicle of another Swiss, however, truly charmed us. Unfortunately we never met him or her or them.

On Monday, we decided to extend our visit for two more days. We moved to the yacht harbor further away from the strong surge of the city harbor, caused by a number of large ferries that arrive regularly the whole day. We went shopping, cleaned, polished and rested.



The days became noticeably shorter. The sun sank below the horizon between 11:50 pm and 1:30 am. But the nights were still rather light and the evening skies presented a breathtaking spectacle.



On Wednesday, 29 July, we left Harstad in the direction of Lødingen. We got up very early in order to catch the south-going current through the Tjeldsund. At our own good speed and the 4 knots of the current we felt like sailing on a river.



The many colorful houses left and right on the shore made me get my camera time and again.



There was no wind and the smelly monster ran all the way to Lødingen. The inner harbor is not really deep enough and an unmarked stone is somewhere in the entrance, so we looked for and found a good place on the outer pontoon, near the landing pier of the ferry. Our walk through the village had its highlights and depressing moments. We passed pretty houses, but also an ugly building full of black people with obviously

no employment. The sight reminded us of problems we also have in Switzerland. Not a good feeling. The remaining hours of the day we just rested. Next day we started on the way to the Tysfjord.



Our last look back into the harbor presented us with a great picture of two pairs of David and Goliath, one in blue, the other one in red. Unfortunately the Davids are hardly visible on the pictures. Especially the red one is so tiny that it is almost hidden by the large underwater "bulge" of the Goliath.



Before we left for good, Alex had me go close to a group of small fishing boats and also tried his luck. He only caught a small saithe, but it made a tasty starter. The weather was great, but no wind. And again we had to use the engine to get to our anchoring place. Our journey led us through marvelous landscape. The mountains loomed majestically over us.



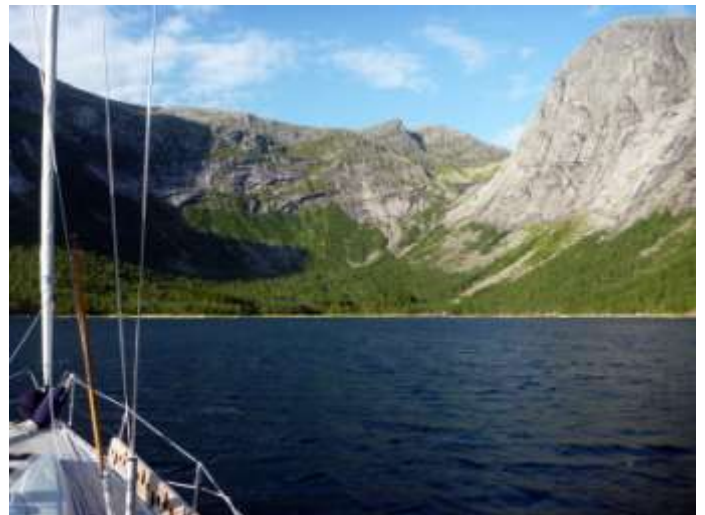
This one is called God's Anvil.



We also came across witnesses of very bad weather.

Later on we heard that this fishing vessel had engine trouble during a storm and could not be maneuvered out of harm's way. The crew managed to save themselves, but the storm and many afterwards pushed the wreck up on this shelf.

In a bowl-shaped bay called Sildpollen, we dropped anchor. The bay is encircled by tall mountains almost all the way round. We felt like floating in a soup dish. Fortunately fog had not added the lid. A half-naked man (open shirt revealing a hairy chest to the navel! it was truly that warm) arrived in his speed boat for a beer visit. And he told us about the wreck. His father is the owner and was the captain during the storm.



The night was totally calm and well rested in the morning we went ashore for an extended stroll.



We enjoyed many fantastic impressions. There were stones in abundance, with and without wigs, . . .



. . . berries



Orchids . .





. . . and seaweeds in various still lives and in great masses in the shallow water.

I also found mushrooms, but lost part of them from the open bag and never got them again.

The water close to the shore was warm enough to tempt us to wash off the sweat in a quick bath.

Around two o'clock we left Sildpollen and on our way spoiled our eyes again with long looks to the gorgeous mountains all around us.

We made fast in Kjøpsvik, first at the end of the pontoon and then further inside to maneuver Silmaril with her nose into the wind and away from the waves, since rain and wind were announced for the night.

Saturday, 1 August. We woke up to terrible weather, wet and grey, but we still ventured up the hill to get some food. And again there was no wind. We cruised into the Helleom Fjord to find a good anchoring place to go on the long hike to the Swedish border. In the near mountains at the end of the fjord, Norway is only 6 or 8 km (depending on the book) distant from Sweden. After a number of tries we finally succeeded in detecting good anchoring ground in Nordbukta. Summer houses line the shore in small numbers and a loud creek shoots its waters over a tumble of rocks into the bay. Despite the signs of civilization we still felt very much in the wild on Silmaril, peacefully swinging at anchor far out in the bay. And here started a series of unforgettable events.

It all began next morning. We intended to hike to the Swedish border. But since we were not sure to find water deep enough to leave Silmaril unattended, we decided to make the trip to the end of the fjord by dinghy. The motor of the dinghy had been in the service after trouble with the fuel supply. But we knew that nothing had been done to cure the problem. Well, the motor was still in questionable repair and stuttered ominously. And our fuel supply was very scanty. We set out in typical Zehnder fashion. Alex was not concerned in the least!



The hike delighted us.



We met with small rivers in the valley, saw enormous waterfalls in the far distance and walked up to flows over rock smoothed by glaciers.



We also found mushrooms, giant samples of boletus, but mostly birch boletus of regular size.



Often we had to search for the right path among huge boulders looking for white splotches of paint.



The path across this incline is secured by rocks. With rain or snow the passage would be very dangerous, since a little way further down, the incline becomes a precipice that plunges all the way to the valley bottom. We encountered incredible rock formations, fathomless pits . . .



. . . looming monsters, . . .



. . . and small wet stones.



After hours we reached the border barefoot. We had never put our shoes on again after the wobbly crossing.



The plastic bag is full of mushrooms.

On our hike we met two groups of other hikers. Two German men passed us as we were starting our descent. They had huge backpacks full with their tent, cooking gear and fishing equipment. They were on their way back to Sweden after fishing in the wild for a week.



Before we undertook the actual descent we refreshed ourselves in the sweet water of one of the numerous lakes.

In the steepest section downhill we encountered the second group. They were two young Norwegian couples going to camp for five or six days up here, fishing hiking and just enjoying life. You have to be very strong and in good shape to be able to enjoy camping here. We were mighty glad to have no such loads on our backs.

Back down in the valley we took another bath in the small river between boulders and tiny sandy beaches.

The return trip by dinghy was a nervous affair, at least for me. We knew that the fuel would not last for the whole trip and the engine was stuttering even more now. It was getting dark and cold; we had been on our way for nine hours. Just as we reached the nose at the entrance of the bay, the last drop of fuel was used up and all our sitting on one side of the dinghy and tilting it to even empty the fuel tube, was to no avail. The engine stopped dead. There was no help, Alex had to row. It was not such an easy task. Wind had come up and the rubber dinghy had to contend with nasty little waves and Alex against the oncoming wind. On the last 600 m it was very cold, I was shivering, but Alex was sweating.

Monday, 3 August. Hey, you, get up fast, the dinghy is gone! Alex's voice betrayed his anxiety; it was no joke, no dinghy at the line. In nightgown and pajama we searched the coastline with the binoculars and did indeed detect a small white boat with an engine sticking at its back. It was laying in the shallow water



of the rocky shore just before the bay opens up into the wide fjord and held fast by the rocks sticking up above water level in low tide. So, anchors aweigh in a hurry and go after the fugitive. The chart mentions that depth contours are only rough estimates in the bay. I therefore steered Silmaril very gingerly toward those rocks. Alex simply had to swim the last 20 m. Fortunately his level of adrenaline was still very high, since the water was very cold here, a mere 13°C.

How on earth could this have happened? Alex is still convinced today that his bowline was perfect, but the gentle movements of the dinghy must have loosened it. No matter, we were overjoyed to have it back. We had breakfast in a small bay close to the cliffs with only insufficient hold of the anchor in 30 m depth and 50 m chain. But with the nice weather we ate in the cockpit and observed every movement of the boat.

Soon we moved on along the impressive cliff walls of the fjord.



We needed some peace and quiet after the past stressful events. Tømmervika seemed just the right place to go, a wide shallow bay only about two hours away. We dropped anchor pretty close to the shore and enjoyed the sight of the surrounding mountains and the few summer houses along the wide bay. We heard a lawnmower and soon the engine of a motor boat. It was a Samish visitor, who had cut the grass at his summer house and now wanted to know where we came from and where we were heading. His name is Runne Knudsen.

He first invited Alex to go collect mussels, then he came aboard to drink coffee with us (no beer, even boats are vehicles that are driven under the law of 0% alcohol and he is a bus driver). Between his English and our Samish we understood quite a bit. He explained that the dark fins moving about in the totally calm water were "Nise", harbor porpoises. "Good kjøtt" he said. "You . . . (Alex mimics catching fish with a fishing rod . . .?)" "No, you shoot, but you shoot, police." Yes, of course, the porpoises are good to eat but unfortunately protected!!!



We had great fun talking to Runne with hands and feet. We cleaned the mussels in the evening and ate them next day with great gusto and thought of Runne. The evening sky compensated fully for the hectic morning.

In the morning we took a bath in the reasonably warm water. The bay is very shallow and the water was much warmer than out in the fjord. Our warm water shower out on deck was still a luxury much appreciated.

On our way to Korsnes we stopped briefly in the harbor of Drag, where Runne lives, but we could not find a suitable place to

make fast. There were boats and ferries moving in every direction in the small harbor and no pontoon to get out of their way. We continued on our way in the magnificent landscape under the bluest sky decorated with grand cloud tableaux.



The small village of Korsnes has a rather wide harbor and we found a good place at the end of the pontoon. At the sandy beach right in the harbor a group of women and children took sun baths. It was really hot.



We walked through the village, passed a pretty white church, a few nice houses and a "wild" rabbit, but no store.



Two of the Bikini women offered to take us along shopping with the car. That was easy. The next morning we had good wind and sailed out into the Vestfjord. Alex planned to anchor in a bay with a very narrow entrance, surrounded by tall mountains and with easy access to a large lake. We had expected a solitary little bay just for us. But even as we reached the entrance, two motor boats overtook us and disappeared between the cliffs of the entrance. And as we reached the inner bay, we saw quite a number of boats.



Very cautiously we chose a good spot to make fast. We dropped the stern anchor and Alex undertook the maneuver to get mooring lines on shore with the dinghy.



He had to climb around the rock to find a suitable fissure for the nails that would hold the lines.



After a while the lines were in place with enough leeway for the tidal range.



And here she floats between stern anchor and four nails in the rock. The evening was so beautiful!



The enormous sun sank behind the Lofoten far away and a little later the wind had died and left the water like a mirror that reflected the gorgeous clouds and light in the sky.



Late at night Alex needed to catch another fish. He rowed out to the middle of the bay, dropped a hook and within minutes caught a big cod. It weighed 8 kg.



The monster had a half digested small fish in his mouth.



Cleaning the cod proved an acrobatic affair. The small board balanced between the dinghy and Silmaril's stern offered little stability. Somehow Alex succeeded and we ate part of one of the filets (about 800 gr.) for a late dinner.

Thursday, 6 August. Fog. Around 10 o'clock the sun had sucked it up and we went to the lake by dinghy, took a brief swim and dried on the warm rocks.

The passage to the Lofoten across Vestfjord was a bit frustrating, no wind again and instead of the nice sounds of sails and rig we heard and smelled the engine all the way.

Before we reached our first destination, the island of Skrova, we passed this stunning lighthouse.

We took the longer way to Skrova around the group of little islands, because we did not quite trust the height of the aerial cable that spans the passage between them. In the harbor of Skrova we moored Silmaril at a brand new pontoon in front of a row of summer houses. We called someone to ask whether we could stay for a night. And yes, it was O.K. A Norwegian family, who rented one of the houses, gave us electricity. We gave the kids Toblerone and the parents the second of the cod filets. There was still plenty left of the first one for our own dinner.

Right in front of our pontoon, a group of Italians were housed. We guessed older parents with grown children and their husbands/wives. They behaved a bit "nose in the air". But when the young man dropped his expensive cell phone into the 4m of water right in front of Silmaril, they were happy to accept help. And of course, Alex assisted in the operation. Together with the electricity-providing Norwegian the three of them succeeded in retrieving the phone with two oars tied together and a fishing net on a pole fixed at one end. The Italian hurried inside to water his prize phone in plenty of sweet water. Did it ever function again, I wonder?



Friday, 7 August. We sail to Svollvær. First we went to the cheap gas station, where we had intended to fill up with Nanny and Michael on a Sunday, but had found everything closed. Today they were very busy and I had to squeeze Silmaril between two motor boats and wait for a long time for the diesel hose. We continued to the marina and found a very nice place at the front side of a long pontoon. We asked for permission to lay there from one of the harbor masters, since the pontoons are always locked and we needed a key. We planned to stay for a few days and explore the capital of the Lofoten. Alex worked on the dinghy engine (no picture allowed, he worked in trunks and one black support knee sock) and in the evening we went out for dinner, a rare event. We sat on the terrace near Rica Hotel on the small island in the harbor, enjoyed the wine, the mussels and the view of the city harbor.



From our mooring place, we saw two fishing vessels arriving every few hours at the pier of the fish factory to have their catch lightened by a huge suction tube.



It seemed that at this moment, only one side tank had been emptied. The vessel lay straight in the water before it left again.

Toward the other side we saw the Svolvær Geit, the Svolvær Goat. The two rocks are famous. Many mountain climbers come to jump from one horn to the other.



With the binoculars I observed a man while he was crossing; an awe-inspiring sight. My camera does not have a really good lens for such distances, so there is no picture, sorry.

Saturday was cleaning and washing day. I never have and probably never will spend so much money on washing. For the three loads I had to pay sfr. 50.00. Mind you, the tumbler was included.

Until very late at night, actually early in the morning we watched the movie "Les Misérables". Impressive, depressive.



On Monday it still rained occasionally. But we decided to visit the Viking Museum in Borg anyway. The trip by bus was very interesting. For once we experienced the land behind the shores. But here as well we saw water everywhere.

The museum gave us a lot of detailed information on the archeological finds and the reconstruction of the longhouse. We were truly impressed by the quality of research and presentation.

Around 1000 AD a powerful and rich clan of Vikings resided here. The exhibition shows an amazing number of objects of everyday life, artifacts, tools, textiles, furniture, crops, animals, etc.

The textiles fascinated me. There were woven fabrics, cords and trimmings in tablet weaving, needle work, knitting, crochet, sprang, etc. Everything made with handspun material, of course. The techniques they used and the level of accomplishment struck me again as extraordinary, considering the time and place of production. Of course, this was plain naïveté of the first moment. I know very well that the Vikings and peoples thousands of years before the Vikings made ingenious and beautiful things. But in this dark house with an open fire and furs for bedding on an island out in the Atlantic Ocean it seemed quite a miracle.

The place made a deep impression. We could even eat a Viking meal at the sturdy tables next to the fireplace, a stew cooked over the open fire, served with Viking bread and sour cream. Scrumptious!



Down at the waterfront lie a few reconstructed Viking ships. Even the landing stage is rebuilt in Viking fashion, according to the archeological finds.

In the evening back on Silmaril, we received a call from the nursing home that Alex's mother was very bad. We immediately began to organize our return to Switzerland.

Silmaril could stay where she was, a harbor master would have an eye on her. We could depart easy in our minds.

Here ends the 3<sup>rd</sup> report. I will tell you more about our further experience in Norway in the 4<sup>th</sup> and final report for 2009.

Kind regards to all of you

Ursula and Alex