

# JollenFlottille 2015

*Puffin's first camping cruise trip*



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# Introduction

At the end of 2009 Daniel Blake, a contributor to the German internet "Segeln-Forum" ([www.segeln-forum.de](http://www.segeln-forum.de)), suggested that dinghy sailors who were interested in exploring new surroundings could arrange to meet at a mutually agreed location and sail together for a few days. His efforts and a lively on-line discussion led to the small Port of Barth (on the "Bodden" a series of lagoons on Germany's Baltic coast) being chosen early in 2010 as a first meeting place for the event which was subsequently held between the 30th of June and the 4th of July and attended by boats from many parts of the country.

We had a lot of fun and our reports on the Internet kept the discussion alive and diverse "JollenFlottille" groups have met in the past years:

- 2011 in Barth,
- 2012 on the "Achterwasser between Usedom and the mainland,
- 2013 on the Schlei (a long inlet of the Baltic in North Germany), and
- 2014 on the lakes of Schwerin, the capital of Mecklenburg-Pommern.

The mix of boats attending differed every year, but a certain "core group" had developed. Some "old hands" came in new boats, even down-sized in some cases. In the course of the run-up discussion to 2015, we decided that more room and salt water (although the salinity of the Baltic is not too high) would be great and chose a marina on the island of Dänholm near Stralsund as our base.

I have published reports on the first two meets in German, but time restrictions have prevented me compiling English versions. To make up for this, I wrote the 2012 report in English and I wrote my handwritten log of the 2015 meet in English anyway. I originally typed the latter up on the Mirror Dinghy Discussion Forum but never managed to make a complete PDF document. Now retirement and bad weather have given me the necessary impulse. I hope it gives some idea about our ever-changing event and encourages some readers to enjoy small-boat sailing aka dinghy cruising.

Once again, we took hundreds of pictures, some of which are shown in this publication. Which brings me to an important topic:

## Copyright

### ***Pictures***

All pictures were taken by people who took part in the event and the copyright remains the possession of the respective photographer. Copying and/or other utilization or publication is only permitted with prior written permission of the copyright holder. If you are interested in using the pictures, I can provide contact details to the respective person upon request.

### ***Text***

Text by Gernot Hirsinger, Berlin, you may copy and use the text or excerpts, but only if you also state the source and the author's name.

### ***Web links and other publications***

Our Youtube short film <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgzu0nXQRxI> was a great success, so that I've collected the various videos as a playlist on my YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLf361BnuGMUbEiRIGA9MEaQ5TTLypljP>

The other reports, as well as dinghy cruising tales by other people, can be accessed via the documents page of the Mirror Dinghy Discussion Forum (<https://mirrordiscussforum.org/documents.html>).

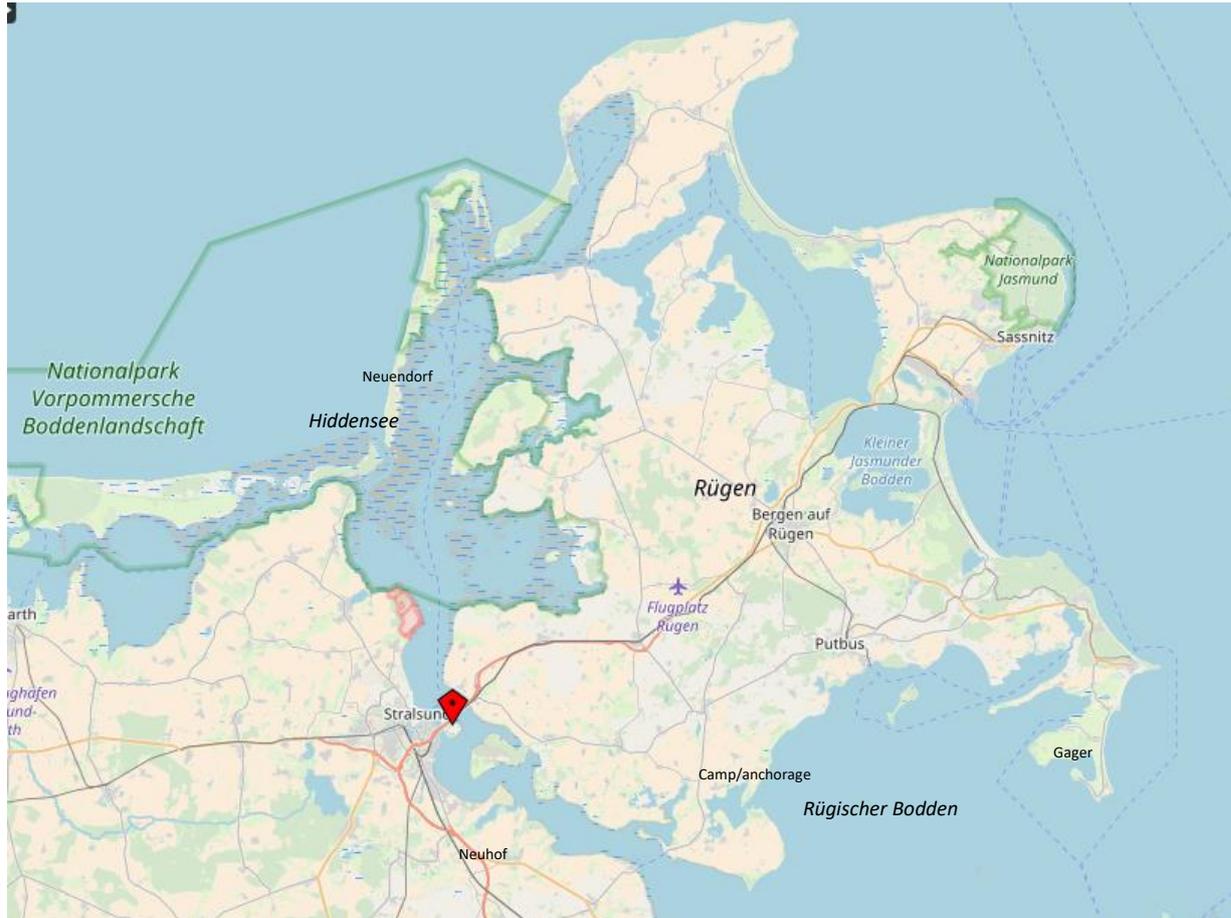
*Gernot Hirsinger, Berlin, 2019*



## The JollenFlottille 2015 – Puffin’s first camping cruise trip

### Prologue

After the last JollenFlottille had convened on the inland lakes of Schwerin, almost in the shadow of the magnificent palace that now houses the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the potential participants of the 2015 meeting discussed looking for more open waters and, for some, a venue for a real cruise. One of our former participants found an ideal base for exploring the waters around the island of Rügen – the marina of several yacht clubs on the island of Dänholm. This is a little island in the Strelasund, between the city of Stralsund and Rügen. The bridges connecting Rügen to the mainland pass over the island.



Map showing the German Baltic port of Stralsund and the island of Rügen. The red marker shows the little island of Dänholm in the Strelasund.

From Dänholm, we’d have access to the westward route to Hiddensee and if the wind were to be bad on that side, the eastward waters of the Strelasund, the passage between Rügen and the mainland. For the more adventurous of our group, the idea of circumnavigating Rügen started forming. The suggestion for Dänholm was soon accepted by all and the date was set for 26 June to 30 June with the option of continuing to the 5<sup>th</sup> of July on a proper cruise, perhaps around Rügen. Some of our members then decided to start out on Wednesday (traditionally the weekday for the road trip to the base) 24<sup>th</sup> of June, so that they could get in a few days’ extra enjoyment. But we were due to celebrate our grandson’s first birthday and so I stuck to the official starting date.

‘Puffin’ was in relatively good shape and I did not have to carry out any major work on her, just the normal checks. However I’d left our digital camera out in the rain, which wrecked it, and so I decided to invest in a waterproof Nikon. I also bought a pair of additional fenders, only to find that I needed a special adapter to pump them up, which meant an additional round trip to the boating supplies shop.

## 26<sup>th</sup> June – setting out for Dänholm

After breakfast, I drove to Spandau, where the yacht supply store and a big electronics market are virtually next door to one another. It didn't take long to find and purchase the camera model I'd decided to buy and to get the little brass thingy for pumping up the fenders. On the way out of Spandau I filled the car tank, then drove to the "Hallig" where Puffin lives most of the year. There I loaded her onto the roof rack, collected all the bits and pieces that were needed for the trip and loaded all into the car. A visit to a bakery for a loaf of grey bread was the last stage of my morning preparations. By this time it was fairly hot and after packing the remainder of my baggage into the car at home, I was only too happy to cool down under the shower.

We had left-overs from our grandson's birthday gathering for lunch and then set off at 14:30. The drive took exactly 3 hours and we checked in Pam, my wife, at a hotel on Dänholm, as she did not intend to drive home in the dark. After she had checked in, we drove across to the marina to unload Puffin and my gear. We were welcomed by the rest of the crew and had dinner and a few beers in the Bistro (<http://www.smutjes-am-sund.de>) before turning in for the night.

## 27<sup>th</sup> June – A dull day, getting to know the area

The weather was overcast when I emerged from my tent in the morning, it didn't look at all inviting



but at least there was a light breeze blowing, so that there was a chance of getting a bit of sailing later on. We had arranged for the bistro proprietor to provide a group breakfast buffet. The skippers' meeting, by tradition, was held while we had breakfast. Some of the party decided to forego sailing in the indifferent weather and to go sightseeing in Stralsund instead. Those who had voted to go out all the same agreed that we'd just mess around in the Strelasund within easy reach of the marina in case the weather really worsened, as some weather reports had forecast.

*Tim and Gernot just messing around in boats*

After pottering around in the northern section of the Strelasund, Tim in his Laser 2 "Lümmel" and I decided to sail around Dänholm and then call it a day, as the sky was darkening considerably. The only difficulty was that we didn't know whether the Laser could pass under the closed bascule bridge over which the railway lines and the old main road pass. So after beating upwind under the concrete causeway to the north of Dänholm and reaching around the eastern side, we ran into the shipping channel with a light tail wind, Tim leading the way so that I could estimate the clearance (or lack of it). The mast was definitely too high, but we decided that if Tim heeled the boat far enough, he could make it through. As it turned out, even with him hanging out under the boom with his full weight, his wind vane scraped along under the bridge girders. So he got through, albeit with a bent vane. We sailed through the port where the original "Gorch Fock" is awaiting funds for restoration, a sad sight<sup>1</sup>. She has been bought back from the Ukrainian Navy after being found unfit for further service and is now a museum which has been unable to raise the sum required for the restoration to date. Our landing beach was outside of the port breakwater and marina moorings and by the time we had sailed around the breakwater and beached the boats the sky had turned quite grim.

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<sup>1</sup> After the second World War, she was owned by the Soviet Union and renamed "Tovarish", see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorch\\_Fock\\_\(1933\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorch_Fock_(1933)) for more information.



*Putting off sailing until tomorrow*

As the rain set in, I turned Puffin on her side to prevent water collecting in the hull and by the time I'd finished this procedure the rain had increased so that I was quite soaked. As I was changing my clothes inside my tent, a fairly hefty thunderstorm passed over and I was glad that I'd made sure that all tent pegs were anchored firmly.



After the rain had passed, I took the opportunity to explore the surroundings on foot and discovered a little beach under the causeway where some humoristic sprayer had decorated the boulders. Unfortunately the island is dissected by the roadway and I couldn't be bothered to try finding access to the other side, so I soon made my way back to the Bistro, dinner and some beers.

*The rocks have faces*

Now that it was the second night in the tent, I found myself settling in and wrote up my log for the day, listened to the late news (mainly for the weather forecast – good for tomorrow) before going to sleep.

## 28<sup>th</sup> June – North-West to Hiddensee

The weather report forecast a NNE wind force 3 gusting to 5, turning more easterly in the day. We convened the skippers' meeting at breakfast in the Bistro. We found the price that the host was asking (€ 7.50 per day per person) a bit stiff, considering that he hadn't managed to provide fresh rolls on either day up to now. Still, having no coffee to make and/or dishes to wash up etc. allowed us to start the day in a more relaxed manner and set off on the water earlier, so we decided to continue relying on his service.

The actual observed wind was more from the NNW, but all the same we decided to sail up to Neuendorf on Hiddensee, which is a long, narrow island on the western side of Rügen. This meant beating upwind in the relatively narrow shipping channel that is hemmed in by a nature reserve area and very shallow waters. But we'd be rested and fresh on the upwind leg and then be able to run and reach back home in the evening.

The wind was even a bit more squally than forecast and I wrapped two turns of the mainsail foot around the boom and set up my gaff lift arrangement, essentially a line looped around the mast and passed down through a block so that the gaff can be pulled tightly against the mast when partially lowered to reef the mainsail. It was quite comfortable beating upwind with this reefed configuration and I only had to get out on the gunwales in the most severe gusts that came from time to time. There was quite a lot of traffic coming the other way and this meant continuous dodging out of the way of vessels that had the right-of-way, a frustrating exercise when you have to stay within a fairly narrow channel. In fact I did go too far out on one or two occasions and found my centreboard dragging in the sandy soil or seaweed. Luckily I did not hit any of the erratics (lumps of granite in this case) which are said to be lying around on the bottom of these shallow areas.



28 June 2015 : 14:10 Under a reefed mainsail – last boat to arrive in Neuendorf

The distance from the Dänholm marina to Neuendorf is about 14 nautical miles and it took me about 4 hours to get to Neuendorf. I arrived as the last boat of the fleet, but was quite content, considering that it had been an upwind tacking course all the way. I'd taken quite a bit of spray and was therefore happy that I'd chosen to wear my dry suit although the weather was quite warm. The reefing system had proved to be quite efficient and served its purpose well.

We tied up our boats in Neuendorf's little port, causing some annoyance with a yacht owner who claimed that Ingo's (polyethylene) trimaran had bumped and scraped his yacht's (steel) hull. A bit of wiping removed the polyethylene rubbed on his black paint but still left him muttering in annoyance.



*The fleet assembled in Neuendorf*

To limber up our joints and enjoy the warm afternoon, we walked across the island to the beach on the western side, overlooking the open Baltic. As I'd done once before, I'd left my shoes on board and soon regretted the fact, having to choose between walking on sharp gravelly paths and prickly weeds in the grassy verges.



The water temperature in the Baltic is not very high at this time of the year, but Tim, as he had a wet suit on, insisted on taking a swim. We sat and watched the surf rolling in for a while before setting back for Neuendorf. When we arrived there, we descended on the local port café/general store for refreshments. I bought a bottle of beer to wash down the sandwiches which I'd brought along.

*Flottilla sailors on the windward (western) side of Hiddensee*

Before leaving Neuendorf, I took out the reef as the wind had dropped a little and we'd be reaching most of the way back to Dänholm anyway. It was an easy sail back, as I was able to take the board half

up and cut across the shallows. We had covered a distance of around 27 nautical miles by the time we were back in Dänholm.

Supper was a makeshift meal quickly cooked in front of the tent as the Bistro was shutting down for the night by the time we'd got the boats ashore. I turned in after having a beer or two with some of the others, wrote up the log of the day.

I slept better, getting used to the camping feeling, but at around 4 o'clock rain set in and woke me. Realizing that the boat was upright and not covered down, I dashed out and tipped 'Puffin' on her side, trying not to make too much noise in the process. Luckily my towel was dry and I was able to dry myself in the cramped quarters inside the tent before slipping back into my sleeping bag.

## 29<sup>th</sup> June – Last day of the day-tripper meeting

It was already 8 a.m. by the time I woke up and most of the crews were already out and about. At the breakfast-table skippers' meeting, we agreed that we were a bit worn out after yesterday's long trip. As the forecast had promised light northerly breezes, we decided to sail eastwards along the Strelasund, where there were several small potential landings where one could stop for a snack and a rest. The 470 crews, being set on getting some training sessions, separated from the fleet

By mid-morning we were off, passing under the two causeway bridges connecting Rügen to the mainland.



*Emerging from under the bridges*

The wind being light as forecast, we didn't make too much distance and at some point "Mariejol's" skipper dropped anchor and decided to take it easy while the remainder of the fleet continued as far as Neuhof. The wind had virtually died by the time we docked and we simply left the boats head-on with the mainsails up. We located the marina snack bar and it rewarded our effort as they do a good lunch there.

After we had quenched our thirst and eaten, some dark clouds appeared in the south and a few

little gusts suggested that we might have some bad weather again. The weather forecast had been a bit doubtful in this respect, not excluding the possibility of localized thunderstorms. To avoid having to sail in the rain we therefore set off, making use of the puffs that were gradually gathering strength. However, as we headed west along the wooded peninsula called "Drigge", the wind died again and the clouds to the south of us gradually shifted and seemed to disappear. The hill at the southern tip of Drigge is called "Fuchsberg" (Fox hill, so to say) and this had been masking the wind which had shifted direction more to the north-west, so as we rounded the headland, we were met by a pleasant 3-4 Bft breeze that gave us an enjoyable sail back for the remaining stretch back to our base.

Today being the last day of the "official" JollenFlottille, we had arranged for the Bistro operator to provide a barbecue. This year there were no "shore crews" along to buy food and drinks and it would have been a pity to have to forego a few hours' sailing, so we agreed that the extra expense was worth the while. All the same, Detlef was asked to prepare the salad as he had proved to be a champion in this respect in the past meetings. The weather held all evening and we had a good time



*The barbequeue*

It did start to get chilly by 22:00 and our host wanted to shut the Bistro, so I was in the tent by 23:00 and was able to catch up on writing my log.

### 30<sup>th</sup> June – Going east

I woke early around 06:30, made myself a thermos bottle of hot water for coffee and took a cup of coffee out to the shore to enjoy the view over the sunlit Strelasund and the city with the old sail-training ship “Gorch Fock I” tied up at the dock. We had a last communal breakfast and then I started packing up my tent and belongings, wondering how I’d ever get it all aboard ‘Puffin’ and still have room to sit in the cockpit and sail her.

As a share of my provisions had been consumed in the last three days, I decided to join Markus and Ingo on a shopping expedition in Markus’s car. I also decided to fetch a bit of cash from an ATM to make sure I’d have enough to pay dock fees etc. The crews that were not going on the camping trip packed their boats and gear in the course of the morning and set off home. Jan in “Mariejol” and Markus and his crew in the Lis minicruiser “Charlotte” were moored in the marina and had to tack out through the port entrance while Tim, in the Laser 2 “Lümmel”, Ingo in the trimaran “Windwicht” and I were loading our boats on the little beach by the slipway. The wind was setting straight on the beach and the waves it kicked up had ‘Puffin’ bumping on the gravelly ground (which had a few larger stones strewn around), so I dragged the boat higher up. After everything – two large waterproof bags, one on each side of the centreboard case, and the cooler box plus five-litre water canister behind the thwart – was aboard and the sails set, my “overload” led to me having some difficulty dragging her back into the water. The wind had freshened with gusts around 5 Bft and I decided to take two turns around the boom as a double reef. As the last boat to set out, ‘Puffin’ finally left the beach at 14:30.

Our destination for the evening was a meadow and anchorage marked on the maps as being a bivouac site on the western bank of the Rügischer Bodden (54° 17' 25.3" N 13° 24' 47" E, to be precise). This meant a short beat up to the bridge, then taking advantage of the NNW to push us under the bridge on a broad reach, then running south towards the youth hostel site where the Strelasund turns around the Drigge and then heading westwards. Unfortunately the wind dropped a bit and shifted to a more westerly direction, meaning that we were running downwind with a following wave for quite a while, not as comfortable as reaching. All the same I caught up with the fleet and even overtook Jan. Ingo had not set all sail so that he would not outstrip us too far. It was warm and I’d asked Ingo to take along my dry suit to save a bit of room on my boat. I was wearing just shorts and a T-shirt and enjoying

the afternoon sun. The wind seemed to have dropped a bit more and I decided to shake out my reef before I reached the green number 7 buoy. This meant climbing across my “cargo”, taking out the gooseneck pin and unrolling the sail off the boom, then replacing the pin while the boat bobbed around in the following sea. All this took a while and probably wasn't worth the while as I was soon in a position where I would have preferred to have a reef in. I probably lost as much time as I gained by having the additional sail area.

After turning north around the number 5 buoy northwards into the Rügischer Bodden, I was beating upwind into a force 5 and short, choppy waves. My newly-acquired foam pipe-insulation padding on the gunwales made the bucking-bronco ride a bit more comfortable but the sun was very low at the time and I was getting wet and beginning to feel a bit too cool for comfort. I'd chosen a course further off the



*Full boat*

shore, believing that the stronger wind would get me to the destination faster. The others were closer inshore in smoother waters and got there first. To make things worse, the choppy water made it difficult to spot an approaching gust. I missed one and got knocked down, taking a bucketful of water over the gunwale to add to my misery. I was extremely happy to anchor 'Puffin' in the shallow water by the meadow where the others were already preparing for the evening. The “beach” was a bit rocky, so I decided not to beach the boat, left her at anchor in the shallows and waded ashore, carrying my camping gear.



*The campsite, the bay and the moon*

No showers or “facilities” tonight. Going to the loo requires a spade (or in my case a machete that I use as a universal gardening tool) and a bush in the woods, and the sea replaces the shower. We all made supper and Tim and Jan supplied some beers to enjoy as we watched the moon rise. The other crews then turned in on their boats and I in my tent, listening to the radio until the midnight news

came on. Weather forecast for the coming day was very good, but winds not expected to pick up until early afternoon.

The night was quite cold and there was a heavy dew. On Dänholm, there had been some traffic noise from the bridges even at night, here it was incredibly quiet after the wind died down. At first, the silence was difficult to get used to for a city-dweller like me. All the same, I soon slept like a log.

### *1<sup>st</sup> July – Across the Rügischer Bodden*

The sunlight and gradual rise in temperature in my tent woke me at 06:00 but I peeled off my sweatshirt to adapt and reziped my sleeping bag so that I was able to nap on until 08:00. By that time it was unbearably hot in the tent. Jan had already made coffee when I emerged.



*Breakfast : looking at today's destination (those hills on the horizon)*

After washing in the Bodden waters at the beach I fired up my cooker to make my coffee. I was joined by the others and we held our skippers' meeting over breakfast, as usual. The view over the large bay showed that there was hardly a breath of wind anywhere on our course, it had not really started to get hot and so we took our time. We decided that the village of Gager, due east of us, would be a reasonable destination under the given conditions. Whether to try circumnavigating Rügen was left open until we had a better idea of tomorrow's wind outlook.

As I was packing up my gear and tent, a herd of cows appeared at the top of the meadow and by the time I had loaded the boat they were down at the waterfront curiously inspecting Ingo's trimaran. Ingo was still rigging his autohelm after I'd set off and I could see his boat with the cows nosing around it. Perhaps they were trying to tell him to finally get off their property.



*The cows have come to see us off*

The faintest of breezes from a north-easterly direction had us slowly drifting eastwards, but once the trimaran was under way, Ingo caught up with me. As he hadn't told me that he was experimenting with an autohelm, I was surprised to see him sitting on the deck in front of the mast. All the same, the trimaran gradually passed me. The sun was burning down by then, making it quite unpleasant to sit in the cockpit without much of a breeze. I stuck my arm in the water and found it to be a pleasant swimming temperature, so I stripped, took the painter between my teeth and jumped overboard. With a few minutes of backstroke, I'd come level with "Windwicht", my boat obediently following me. In this mode, it was of course possible to go dead to windward, giving me an advantage anyway.

Refreshed from my swim, I climbed back on board, put on my clothes and settled back into the cockpit.



*Ingo demonstrating his autohelm*

Boredom soon set in, leading me to wonder about all the superstitions surrounding the lack of wind and excessive winds. Whistling is held to be unlucky underway because it may raise too much or too unfavourable wind. But I had my mouth-organ aboard – wouldn't a bit of wind instrument music perhaps raise a breeze? I decided to test the superstition

and treated Ingo to an impromptu demonstration of my rather underdeveloped musical skills. Now we had reached the southern shores of the little island Vilm and the breeze really did start to pick up (actually just as forecasted so it probably wasn't my doing). Just to be on the safe side, I decided not to overdo the witchcraft stuff and put the mouth-organ away as my boat started leaving a really noticeable wake.

Soon a bit of a chop built up in the middle of the bay, sending the occasional bit of cooling spray aboard as we beat eastwards towards the narrow "Hagensche Wiek" where our destination, the fishing village of Gager, is situated. The wind further freshened to around 4 Bft with an occasional stronger gust, making for lively sailing. Tim in the Laser 2 was sailing rings around us, enjoying the sport. I'd lost sight of Ingo and the tri by then. The closer to the eastern shore of the Bodden we got, the smoother the water became. Since the land separating the Bodden from the open Baltic here is not very high, we still had a merry wind to tack into. As Tim came by, we called to one another to discuss whether we'd be able to make it to Gager, now on our starboard beam, in a single tack. The wind was coming straight down the Wiek, making this guesswork. We thought we could, so we went about. We were proved wrong, having to tack several times before making the entrance to the little harbour.

The harbourmaster provided docking spaces for four boats along the local small boats landing and kindly allowed me to pitch my tent on the grass by the dock, all for a minimal fee, which also covered the use of the sanitary facilities (hot showers without having to feed slot machines!). There being five boats in the fleet, I tied Puffin alongside "Charlotte", promising not to come traipsing through Markus' cockpit more often than absolutely necessary.



*Resting after arrival in Gager*

After stowing sails, generally tidying up and changing into "shore gear", we set off to look for a bite as none of us fancied cooking in public. There was a fancy waterfront restaurant but it was a bit above our budgets so we found a pub a few streets "inland" and had a pub-grub meal there.

Supper being over, some of us strolled around the little harbour to look at the wonderful ketch <sup>2</sup>'Elesar' and other boats moored there as well as to enjoy the evening air generally.

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<sup>2</sup> The most recent on-line reference I could find stated that she was built in 1932 and was up for sale, if you have € 239.000 to spare, see <https://www.devalk.nl/en/yachtbrokerage/351350/BERMUDIAN--KETCH.html>



*Ketch 'Elessar' moored in Gager*

"Charlotte's" crew climbed the hill behind Gager, the "Mönchgut", to get a wonderful view of the moon in the eastern evening sky and the setting sun in the west.



*Sunset over the Hagensche Wiek, the village of Gager is at the bottom right of the picture, where the masts are*

It stays light quite late at this time of year in these latitudes and we sat by the boats for quite a while drinking beers which magically emerged from the bigger boats.

Before turning in, I took advantage of the unlimited hot shower. It was around midnight by the time I'd finished penning this note.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> July – Rolling home downwind

After a coldish night, the sun rose over the cottages and heated my tent to sauna temperatures, so I got up and made use of the showers fairly early before the others started stirring. Upon returning to the tent, I saw two elderly gents (i. e. in my age group) leaning over the railing and discussing the trimaran. “Nice craft” they remarked rather loudly “- is it yours?”

I answered “No, that's mine”, pointing at ‘Puffin’. Almost simultaneously, an annoyed voice came from under the tent on the trimaran: “It's MINE!”.

Our original plan had been to try circumnavigating Rügen, but with the strong wind from East and Northeast there would be heavy seas on the long stretches with few safe havens, so we finalized our decision to remain in the Greifswalder/Rügener Bodden area. A beach round the corner at Palmer Ort promised to be a sheltered destination, just out of the wind, so we chose that as our next camp.

In view of the weather report – increasing winds turning from east to southerly, I put on the dry suit and turned a reef in the mainsail. It was still blowing strong as we left and I overlooked a mooring buoy (view blocked by the mainsail) and bumped into it as I set off under just the reefed main. Outside the marina entrance, I raised the jib with some difficulty as I had to scramble across my gear with everything flapping wildly. Luckily here near the eastern end of the Wiek, the water was smooth as the wind was blowing offshore across the flat end of the island.

Off we went on a very broad reach, meeting several big yachts just coming into the marked passage, and soon we were out in the open water, bounced about by the following swells which were occasionally topped by a little breaker. This is what we looked like from the trimaran:



### *Rough trip*

Once again the trimaran and the Laser were surging ahead, but the tri was really being given a shaking. We in the other three boats stayed together most of the way, allowing me, too, to take some pictures in spite of fighting to avoid an unintentional gybe in the churned seas.



*"Charlotte" and "Mariejol" rolling west to Palmer Ort*

Sadly, even dinghy sailors are not unaffected by the seas and by the time we reached the sheltered beach some 12 miles on, one of "Charlotte's" crew had started feeling ill. However he soon recovered and we were able to pull all boats up on the sand. The two inflatable "rollers" with which "Charlotte" was to be rolled up on the beach did not survive the ordeal. My two new fenders and our combined efforts got her high and dry all the same.

The cool, strong morning wind had convinced me to put on the dry suit. Now, in the mid-day heat after hauling up boats, I had great difficulty extricating my feet from the tight rubber ankle cuffs.



*Fighting with the dry suit*

We spent the afternoon enjoying the sunshine, swimming and exploring the beach. When dinner time came, Markus surprised us all with a huge fruit salad, freshly made, for all to share as dessert. That just goes to show that a bit larger boat in the fleet, with storage space for goodies, is a boon to all involved.



*Dinner and dessert on the beach*

After dinner, I took the opportunity to deploy my unwashed dishes in a new "beach art project" work:



*Please wash up!*

It stayed quite warm even after sunset so we sat up quite a while, enjoying cups of tea and swapping tales. I never caught up making my written log entries.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> July – Confusion over campsite

The heat in the tent woke me up long before anyone else stirred. I opened the flaps on both sides, making sure to keep the insect netting shut. If one forgets that, the tent is immediately full of small flying insects of all kinds. Made myself a cup of coffee and filled a thermos flask with hot water to share, then sat and enjoyed the cool morning air.

Over breakfast, we decided to choose an easy day's sail up the Strelasund, stopping at Neuhof for a snack and then looking for a place to spend the night.

The wind had not changed much direction-wise overnight, but had lost some of its strength, making for an easy run/broad reach trip westward up the Strelasund. Just after crossing the path of the Stahlbrode-Glewitz car ferry track, I spied a huge brown sail coming upwind:



#### *Old-timer approaching*

Being a great fan of traditional ships and boats, I couldn't resist changing course to get a closer look. It was a sloop-rigged fishing boat with a registration number MK63 on the sail. After first writing this report on-line on the Mirror Dinghy Discussion Forum, I was given a link by a Dutch forum member and found out that it is a "botter", a fishing vessel, which has been restored to its original conditions by Peter Dorleijn. There is now a web site for the ship and there are several Youtube videos showing work on the vessel, its fittings and some sailing clips.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Web site: <https://www.bottermk63hoorn.nl/mk-63/> Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e807oCUwcHA>



*MK 63 going upwind*



*Food for hungry crews*

I'm afraid I didn't sail to the south of her, so the picture is a little too dark. The helmsman and I exchanged a wave of the arm as a greeting and then I headed for Neuhof. The temperature had soared and my water bottle was soon empty. I'd failed to fill my 5 litre plastic canister with fresh water in Gager and that was now empty, too.

After I got into Neuhof and tied up the boat, I had to put on my shoes double-quick as the concrete jetty was piping hot underfoot. We all made for the bistro/anglers' outfitter where the smoke-curing oven was wafting a delicious odour across the grounds and a table in the shade promised a pleasant break.

The chap who runs the place said he'd put extra fish in because his seventh sense had told him we were coming. As they were not quite ready, we first took some anti-dehydration measures. Following the host's recommendation, I had a whole whitefish (*Coregonus*) with a salad – not cheap, but extremely delicious. It was the first time in my life that I was able to get freshly smoked fish, a big difference to the product sold over the counter or packaged in a supermarket.

Just to make sure we'd survive the rest of the day, we had some more anti-dehydration after lunch while the food settled.



### *Shady lunch spot*

Of course we did heed the warning pinned on the tree in the background, whereby one must remember that none of our boats can fly anyway.

Over lunch we'd decided to spend the night somewhere on the Wamper Wiek, only 4-5 miles away, but the weather report had forecast "possible" thunderstorms and a sharp gust of wind shook the trees as we were walking down to the jetty and so we decided to set off. Overnight "wild" camping meant there would be no taps available, so I filled my 5-litre canister before setting off.

As we'd ample time, none of us took the shortest course. The Strelasund is fairly wide and the breeze was pleasant and some boats sailed towards the city first, probably to take in the view of the shipyard: a huge hall that dominates the landscape and can be seen from many miles away. A few dark clouds had built up but the thunderstorm (thankfully) failed to materialise.



### *Warning to mariners*

The trouble with the "fleet" separating this way was that searching for and agreeing on a spot to spend the night became difficult. The Laser and the trimaran went into a little inlet marked as an

anchorage at the entrance to the Wamper Wiek. Some weekenders with power boats had beached their boats about 50 metres apart and stretched a line between them, thus "reserving" the beach in true German fashion. When asked what that was supposed to be, they retorted that they needed "spring lines" while their families sat on the reserved beach in deck chairs and grinned. The outer beach under a steep bare earth slope did not look inviting, so we went into the inlet, which was already occupied by quite a few cabin cruisers, and found a landing onto which we managed to lift my boat. Tim, the Laser skipper, went off along the forest-covered hillside to look for a possible alternative. There wasn't any, and by the time he returned my feet and bags were crawling with red ants. The whole hillside was infested, which explains why the landing had remained unoccupied!

So we relaunched and re-loaded 'Puffin', adding a few stowaway ants in the process, and then rowed / paddled out to the mouth of the inlet. We tried to establish radio contact with the other two boats but could only get almost unintelligible information that they were already in the Wamper Wiek. This was the only time that relationships in our group were beginning to be endangered. I found a spot to beach Puffin and the Laser followed while the trimaran ran aground gently some way off. Then my mobile phone rang. It was 'Charlotte's' crew, saying they and Jan in 'Mariejol' had found a tiny beach at the eastern end of the Wiek and would stay there. So we set off again in search of them. The wind had dropped but was blowing from due East, forcing us to tack in the extremely shallow water (I grounded twice) and the trimaran which, with its fully-battened mainsail, does not go upwind very well in light airs, dropped far behind. When Tim and I arrived at the beach, the others probably noticed that we were not too happy and Jan cranked up his outboard (for the first time ever on this outing) to give the Ingo on 'WindWicht', the trimaran, a tow in.

Over supper and a bottle of red wine that I'd bought in Neuuhof, we forgot the incident and were treated to surprise entertainment as the sun set. While we were sitting on the little patch of sand having supper, a lady and a gent (category: landed gentry) on horseback came down the track leading to the beach and rode straight into the water, which is just about knee-deep in most of the area. They galloped and trotted to and fro between the boats kicking up a lot of spray.



*Spectators waiting for the horse-riding show*

After they'd left, I set up my tent in the tall grass and got things ready for the night before sitting down again to watch the sun set. To our surprise, our equestrian entertainers re-appeared, this time without saddles and clad in bathing suits. I secretly hoped to see one of them slip off as they charged back into the Wiek, but they were apparently experts and the horses were very well-trained. This time they rode quite a way into the Wiek where there is some deeper water (map says 1.8 metres) and actually more or less swam with the horses.



*Equestrian evening entertainment*

After sunset, the mosquitoes came out of the reed beds in big swarms and, to get as far away from them as possible, we all waded out to the trimaran which actually had enough sitting room for all six of us. The breeze over the water helped keep the level of attack down, but did not prevent the odd mosquito coming our way. I very, very rarely smoke, but was glad to accept Tim's offer of a cigarette to help drive off the insects as we sat and talked.

Back ashore, I made a dive for the tent and its insect netting. Tried to catch up on log-writing (two days behind) but gave up - too tired. I fell asleep almost instantaneously and slept very soundly.

## Saturday, 4th July: Long haul to Hiddensee and home to Dänholm

Early in the morning (I don't wear a watch, my mobile phone is my only timepiece) I awoke because some animal was splashing around in the water and then came sniffing at my tent, a fox, raccoons? (I'm not sure whether raccoons have already crossed over to the island of Rügen.) Cautiously, I unzipped the tent flap to be greeted by two big dogs and the couple that was walking them. There were no signs of anyone stirring on the boats, so after the dog-walkers left, I was able to get a bit more sleep until the heat started building up in the tent.

While we were having breakfast on our beach, we were again treated to equestrian entertainment, this time two ladies rode their horses into the Wiek and splashed around. The spot we'd chosen must be popular with horse-owners, particularly as it is the only "beach" (it's actually only ~ 20 m wide) in the Wiek, which is surrounded by reeds everywhere else.

The wind had turned northerly and was quite weak, blowing offshore here, but the forecast was good and after a bit of discussion, we agreed to sail up to Neuendorf on Hiddensee once more. Jan, who has a long road trip home, decided against participating in this final leg and said he'd leave the fleet as we pass by Dänholm, so that he'd be able to pack up early and get an timely start on the road, so we said our farewells before setting off.

A light breeze drove us westward under the Rügendamm bridges for the last time and gave Tim an opportunity to clean 'Lümmel's' hull.



*Time for some maintenance*

After we'd passed under the bridge, we encountered a huge number of boats of all kinds on the sound between Altefähr on Rügen and Stralsund: police craft, excursion ships, motor and sailing yachts, lifeboats etc. Music and MC comments from a PA system in Altefähr could be heard over the Strelasund. It turned out that a mass swimming race across the Strelasund, which is about 1.8 km wide at this point, was due to start soon. In fact it was started just as I was crossing the line of yellow buoys that marked the 2.3 km course between Altefähr and the public beach in Stralsund. I could see a mass of green bathing caps in thrashing water coming in my direction as I sailed my course westward. The list of participants who finished contains 1009 names, so I assume that at least that number of swimmers had started.

The course west of Rügen to Neuendorf on Hiddensee follows a channel in the otherwise very shallow waters and it is advisable to observe the soundings on the charts, so we mostly kept to the marked channel, being able to stay on one tack for long periods as the wind had freshened and was steady from a north-easterly direction. A fairly large fleet of big yachts was sailing north ahead of us, heading for the open Baltic, and quite a few were returning south.



*Charlotte and Puffin following the fleet heading north. The hill on the horizon to the right of the starboard shroud is the "Bakenberg" on the northern end of Hiddensee.*

Most of those crossing my path were kind enough to keep to the lee of me even in conditions where they could have forced me to give way on a port tack, so that I was spared those annoying dead patches due to overlaps by a much larger sail. Some of the power-boat skippers, however, seemed to take pleasure in passing very close to me at high speed to see 'Puffin' shake, rattle and roll!

After passing between the critical pair of buoys 35 stb / 38 port (rocks to starboard, shallow to port), there was no more danger of accidentally sailing into the "Vierendehgrund" shoal in the nature reserve and risking a fine, so I sheeted off a little and headed straight for Neuendorf. The maps show depths of as little as 0.5 m in places, but as the sands shift and because there are occasional erratic blocks of granite which the ice age left here, I pulled the centreboard half up, just to be on the safe side.

As I approached Neuendorf, I could see the other three boats already at anchor outside the port entrance, along with quite a few small motor boats and cabin-cruisers, in the shallow water. Some children were splashing around between the boats and there were many people out and about on the breakwater that protects the port, which was packed with yachts who probably intended to spend the night there.



*Last anchorage, Neuendorf, Hiddensee on 04 July 2015 16:20*

I asked Ingo to tie my painter to 'Windwicht', the trimaran, since it didn't seem to make sense to string another anchor in these shallows where people were bathing and wading to and from their boats. Apart from that, because I'd had poor results with the little grapnel that I normally carry on Puffin, I was carrying a fairly massive folding grapnel with a length of chain that actually belongs to my 5.2 metre day-sailer 'Anansi'. Using that here would really have been overkill.

Fortunately, I was wearing swimming trunks under my jeans so I took the jeans off and waded ashore in the trunks, then donned my jeans and went off to satisfy some desperately needed human output and input requirements and nose around the docks. There was a magnificent mahogany-hulled 'Sonderklasse' between all the GRP craft, but she was moored in such a tight space that it was not possible to get a decent picture of her. A bread roll with pickled herring ("*Fischbrötchen*") made for an afternoon snack, paid for by another member of our fleet because I'd left my wallet on board the boat.

In order to be sure of getting to our base in Dänholm before sunset, we did not stay in Neuendorf for long. Charlotte, the Lis mini-cruiser set off along the marked shipping channel while Windwicht, Lümmel and Puffin went across the shallows. Nonetheless, the Lis was still home long before me, although I was fairly close behind her for quite a while. At some point when we were entering the Strelasund, Markus must have decided to trim his sails better and put his foot on the accelerator, so to say. Of course the Laser and the trimaran were already far ahead by then, so I took the red lantern once more: red sails – "red lantern".

As I approached Stralsund, the setting sun reflected off the sides of the new Rügen bridge (not sure whether this is glass or aluminium cladding) making it look as if someone had turned on bright floodlights on the bridge.



*The gleaming new bridge, which actually crosses over the island of Dänholm*

The city was bathed in a soft reddish light. Sadly, the photograph does not do the real colours justice. The wind was decreasing, allowing me to tie the mainsheet and get out my phone to call home and confirm we were back. Pam said that she'd try to get off early as it was due to be another day of sweltering heat.



*Stralsund on a summer evening*

The wind was now blowing straight from Dänholm, forcing me to tack backward and forward near the Stralsund port entrance. It must also have generated a bit of a current under the bridges because my tacking brought me very little headway in the rapidly dying breeze so that I gave up in the end and rowed the final 200 metres or so to the delight of the crowd of people standing on and around our slipway waiting to see the sunset and take pictures. A family was barbecuing on the little beach where Windwicht and Lümmel were normally parked. I apologized for spoiling the peaceful sunset atmosphere, but most of the "spectators" seemed to consider my arrival as welcome entertainment.

'Charlotte' and crew set off under outboard power to look for a piece of equipment that had gone overboard in the morning, relying on the faint chance that it might be in the shallows near our last campsite/anchorage. It doesn't get really dark until around 22:30 in mid-summer in this area.



### *End of the cruise*

The boats being safely ashore, Tim soon had a pot of noodles going that was so large as to provide food enough for all. On top of that, the folks who'd been barbecuing left us some grilled salmon to share, a perfect trip's end dinner, washed down with a few beers.

To reduce the amount of work facing us the next day, I took down Puffin's rigging and folded and stowed the sails before enjoying a hot shower and turning in – my last night in a tent for a while.

### *Sunday, 5th July: Pack up and back to Berlin*

My tent was in a shady place behind the Bistro and so I slept well until around 7:30. It was still cool, but the clear sky and light breeze seemed to say that the > 30°C forecast would be correct. I boiled a can of water and made myself a coffee, keeping the rest of the water in the thermos flask. It seemed silly to sit by the tent, without a view, so I took my coffee out on the dock and enjoyed the view of the city. After the others had emerged from their respective sleeping quarters we had breakfast and started packing up the boats.

Pam arrived in the middle of the action and Puffin was soon on the car roof. We helped Ingo get the hull of the tri on its trailer, he said the amas (outriggers) were no problem.

After a farewell chat that dragged on a while, we set off across Usedom to Glewitz to get the ferry: a wonderful drive through tree-lined alleys in the rolling countryside. On the mainland side, Stahlbrode, we had a snack – my last "Fischbrötchen" for a while – before heading for the Autobahn. Unfortunately we ended up in a huge traffic jam and spent 2 hours in a stop-and-go queue of weekend travellers returning to Berlin from the lakes and surrounding countryside.

'Puffin' had developed some paint cracking and the keel tape is coming loose at one point – probably the hot sun her black bottom and a week's continuous sailing have taken their toll, so we took her off the car roof at home, not at "Auf der Hallig". She'll be staying in our garage until that's fixed.

She behaved very bravely and deserves a little TLC!

