

CRUISING in PLOES 1st to 8th October 2016.

Skipper: Roger Parker

Crew: Jill Parker, Marc Overton, Neil Trask, Hugh Johns (Author)

One advantage of cruising in the warmth of the Mediterranean, with its relatively predictable weather, is that you know what kit to bring and it's rather less than required for a week in the North Sea. All five of us with our bags were able to fit in to a single car and drive to Stansted for the Easyjet to Dalaman. It arrived after dark and our pre-booked taxi took us to Fethiye without a hitch. Thoughtfully, the previous crew had left some beers on board to welcome us and Ploes was in a clean and tidy condition. The only provisioning we needed to worry about was to buy some duty free gin at Stansted and a sandwich to augment the in-flight catering.

Only two of us had been on Ploes before and therefore Sunday morning was spent learning where things were as well as shopping in the marina supermarket for heavy items like bottled water and beer before shopping in the town for more obscure foods. However, Roger had more trouble registering the crew change with the authorities as some offices were closed because it was Sunday. Money changing was no problem and surprisingly un-bureaucratic but it proved impossible to get replacement mooring lines on a Sunday as the more specialised chandlers were shut ~~ere~~.

An afternoon sail around the local island of Kizil Adasi in the strong afternoon sunshine with light sea breezes provided a shakedown for the crew and the opportunity to learn the strange skill of lazy-line mooring. After returning, the duty free and local beer proved a suitable relaxation before to visiting Megris restaurant in the town and trying their clay pot casserole.

Photo - Leaving Fethiye

Normally, upon recovering consciousness after a large meal the night before, humanity grasps a mug of coffee and consumes a sweet pastry or something of that ilk. The combination of stimulant and sugar restores hope and makes the forthcoming day seem possible.

There was one puzzle about Ploes; there seemed to be a very remiss situation about the coffee. We searched in the darkness of all lockers and cupboards but gave up glumly, unable to find a cafetiere. It wasn't until our one female crewmember surfaced that this culinary necessity was discovered in its proper place in the crockery locker. Well, it's difficult to see a transparent glass thing in a dark locker.

With optimism restored, Ploes was steered out of Fethiye and sailed on a fairly close reach almost due west as the wind strengthened. As with most days, lunch was a snack while sailing. We passed through the gap to the south of Domuz Adasi island and tried to anchor in Seagull Bay but failed to find a suitable place. We therefore motored on to Kuyruk Br, anchoring with a shoreline swum to a bollard, where we tried out the swimming and snorkelling. Finally we motored to Kapi Creek for the evening and berthed at the restaurant.

On Tuesday morning we wandered around the bay and bought bread from the traditional Turkish oven behind the restaurant before getting away by 9:00am and heading west for Ekincik Koyu. It was unfortunate that, on the day we had selected for a longer trip, the anticipated westerly sea breezes never really stabilised and the wind proved rather light and variable. What wind there was, was largely on the nose causing us to motor much of the way but we succeeded in having a couple of good sails in the afternoon. Eventually we anchored at the north end of Dalyan Beach beside Delik Adasi island for a swim but didn't go as far as the shore. While at anchor we were pestered by boats proffering trips up the Dalyan River and even selling cold drinks. Later in the afternoon, we motored and sailed round the corner to an establishment calling itself "My Marina" in Ekincik Bay.

Photo - Ploes at Splendiferous "My Marina"

According to its promotional literature, this place is "splendid and sophisticated" and has been visited by Hollywood stars. It has to be admitted that it was definitely a tranquil setting and notably clean and tidy with a quaint facilities block up a very steep hillside and a very pleasant restaurant even higher up for the evening meal. Slightly earlier in the year, the sunset views across the bay from both these establishments must have provided a stunning accompaniment to the evening meal but we were probably a little too late in the season for it was dark when we dined. The track up was notably steep and rough and it was the first time any of us could remember feeling the need for climbing boots to reach marina loos. It appeared that, in earlier times, there had been some sort of railway system for hauling goods up from the harbour to the building that had become the restaurant. It was still sufficiently remote to have problems with the reliability of its power supply and had to resort to using a generator at times.

The following day, the morning wind was at first rather light and then seemed to be heading us and we were obliged to motor back eastwards to anchor inside Baba Adasi island for lunch. In the afternoon the wind became more obliging and moved round to its accustomed southwest and we sailed, on a reach, back to Kapi promontory, although the sea became rough producing a lot of rolling near the headland. After the headland, the wind died again and we motored back through the gap south of Domuz Adasi and lazy line berthed at Sarsila Koyu for a swim before repairing to the restaurant. This whole coast is spectacular with cliffs and steep drops down to the sea.

Photo – The rocks underwater

Thursday morning held little prospect of wind and we motored to Tomb Bay, anchored and swum two lines ashore to tie around rocks. Quite a bit of time was spent in swimming and snorkelling before lunch. A turtle was in the bay but it didn't seem too keen to allow us to get close to it. In the afternoon, three of us rowed the dinghy to the beach and climbed the very rough and indistinct track to the main tomb. It offered spectacular views over the Aegean and one could appreciate that any ancients who were lucky enough to have been buried there would have anticipated an amazing resurrection – assuming that they believed in such things. In the afternoon we motored to Yassica Adalari island and took a buoy while we swum and snorkelled again. Some wind returned in the afternoon and we sailed us downwind to Gocek under foresail alone before entering Skopea marina with a tricky crosswind for the lazy line berth.

Photo - View from the Tomb

Photo – Turtle in Tomb Bay

With some dread, we saw a large party-boat style sailing catamaran berth next to us. It seems it was crewed by ex-law students from Durham University who were enjoying a reunion. We had seen them earlier in Fethiye when they pulled out of their berth almost into a yacht moving along the lane and proceeded to deal with their felony by expressing a forthright and vernacular opinion of the innocent party! Dinner was in an establishment rejoicing in the name of “Kebab Hospital” - a somewhat intimidating title to a fine establishment. Apparently it had been the intention to title it more like “Kebab Hospitality” but something got lost in translation. Sadly, this was the most expensive stay of our trip, the marina charging €51 for Ploes! It was a pity because the facilities were over-crowded and some, like the marina swimming pool, simply weren't operational.

On Friday we continued to explore the western side of Fethiye Bay, motoring to Atbuku Koyu where we anchored with a shore line to swim and snorkel. The sea here seemed less clean with some plastic and other materials in the water. Wind came later in the morning and we sailed back east to Ciglik Koyu for further swimming and snorkelling. By then the sea breezes had become reasonably powerful and Ploes performed well on reaches across the bay to Boynuzbuku Koyu. It was cooler sitting out to eat that evening and there was a feeling of a change in the weather.

On the final day we packed up and had a larger than normal breakfast to use up bread and rather a lot of coffee, before setting off motoring across the bay towards Fethiye. A southerly wind sprung up mid morning and enabled us to sail the second half of the journey in almost ideal conditions. However, the wind dropped each time we went behind an island as we approached Fethiye.

The berthing situation in Fethiye seemed confusing. We went into the marina to get fuel but found an Austrian yacht already waiting at the end of that lane. Eventually a marinara arrived in a small RIB and told us we must radio before entering harbour and there was a 15min wait for fuel. Accordingly we went outside and waited for about 25 minutes before trying the radio but got no response. Eventually, with time getting on, we went straight to the fuel berth with no more ado. Getting off the fuel berth was more difficult because the wind was pressing us forward and into the quayside. The fuel marinara didn't seem to like us using a spring but wanted us just to reverse out; luckily it worked.

New mooring lines were obtained and we became the source of some amusement when setting them up because we wore lifejackets. It seems such things are unheard of in the Aegean in summer - if you fall in, you swim! Workers on other boats stopped to take pictures of us!

Sadly, the vacuum cleaner proved more elusive than the cafetiere but we did our best to clean up. We only just finished and had a quick supper in time for the taxi. Dalaman airport had some long queues it being Saturday evening and the height of the package holiday change-over rush. At least the flight ran to time and we had no

problems getting back to Ipswich. However, Ipswich had none of the warmth of Fethiye.