

## Father and Son – Flo Bertzbach

Last summer we wanted to show our Shrimper *Suse von der Lesum* (1139) the Danish South Seas, places we sailed in the sixties and seventies with the Folkeboot FG71. The crew: Florian, then 10 years old but today the skipper (62), and father Peter (92), today rather the guest of honour.

Much has changed, ports and ships have become much bigger, but still it has the magic of a wonderful sailing retreat, made for our lovely Shrimper. In most of the ports we were one of the smallest boats, so to find our *Suse of the Lesum* was easy: find the lowest mast.

In Marstal we met one of the three Danish shrimpers and with Nini and Bent Andersen (*Rejen* - 1009) we spent a few sailing days - a Mini Shrimper meeting. We were even able to discover a pleasant little port not mentioned in the chart, barely 2nm from the popular Marstal, known for its maritime history. Extensive shallow waters between small islands stretch the distance from Marstal to Ommel by boat to about 12 nm. So a shallow-water zone seduced us to choose this as a shortcut.

On the seachart was shown 1.1m water. It had rained a lot, good water level, enough for a Shrimp. A light wind from behind also made it easy, because with the clear water and just two knots we saw a lot of sea grass, so did not start the engine.

Actually, sailing in shallow water is nothing special for us; in our home region in Holland we move a lot in the mudflats and are used to sailing tidal waters. Even at 70cm water depth we were therefore not nervous, but then the echo sounder stopped registering at less than 50cm and we could only use the sounding rod called a *Faarboom* in the Netherlands. We came over without touching the ground, at 0.5m by the *Faarboom*.



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Having always followed the channels for the larger-draft ships, we now learned quite new possibilities. Special caution is advised, if in the chart "R" is indicating rocks – rocks we did not want to find.

In Svendborg, Peter had an experience that was the first in his long sailing life: during harbour manoeuvres he fell into the water. The Secumar vest inflated automatically, so it was nothing except that he was wet. But we had to learn that it is not easy to come back on board without help. As Tim Reid reported in 2010, it was very difficult to get the foot on to the lowest rung of the ladder even though our Shrimper was not on the run.

With the help of Florian, Peter made it, the only damage a wet phone. We learned that the phone is not worn when it is not waterproof, and, like Tim, we think about ways to facilitate boarding. A help could be a fixed rope, which is grabbed to get the body further away from the ladder, and then hopefully the foot can reach the ladder.

After 14 wonderful sailing days with many small 'Shrimper harbours', father Peter unfortunately had to leave the ship: he had broken a finger in a fall ashore.



The third week I sailed therefore with my wonderful wife Sabine, who has no sailing experience but enjoys the Shrimper very much. In her I had not only a wonderful companion but also a very fast-learning and excellent helmsman.

**Florian Bertzbach** – *Suse von der Lesum* (1139)