

## 2007/2008, building the Bouvaan Windvane, boat repair, decision to leave the Netherlands

After coming back from the boat to Vienna again we have been very unhappy about the weather situation in the Netherlands. Most of the time it was very cold and wet and the sailing season with warm weather was due to it actually very short. During all the months on the boat this year we have had about only a couple of days of fine weather being out in summer cloths not only during the day but also in the evenings. Another thing was that we have gone a little bit bored of the sailing area: Because of our draft many places have been out of range for us -most of the inside waterways- and the places that were not have been not so much attractive to see again after been there for once. And to sail to England more than one time has been never an option.

The Netherlands are a very nice area for sailing with constant and mostly not too strong winds, although the climate implications are obvious there as well. Sailing only without any change in respect of possibilities when not at sail or in respect of culture were a further reason to have a look out on an area with more broad possibilities. Once in the MED we would have a lot of different countries to visit, a lot of different cultures to experience and we would have an uncountable more possibilities on routes and activities.

Already when buying the boat the **transfer to the Mediterranean** has been under some not so focused consideration, however the first of all concentration was directed to the learning of the boat handling and some more experience in sailing, the time to come for further decisions on a later stage.

Independent of the location of our boat there was the idea to sell our apartment in Vienna and to settle in the Netherlands because basically we have liked to live in NL and the prices for houses in the Den Helder region had been lower than those in Vienna at that time. As the sale of our apartment in Vienna did not develop as we would have hoped, and when we had a purchaser at hand for the Vienna location we did not have some alternative in NL, it was God's will to bring us an option in Vienna that has fairly suited us.

It was finally my feeling of running out time to make the transfer now and not later.

The question was only the route to take, either to sail the Atlantic ocean around Spain to Greece or to take the route through the channels in France. Each of it would have advantages and disadvantages: The channels would become a problem because of our boat's draft of 1,80m - which is the official limit of the channel-administration-, however river motoring through a fascinating scenery would be relaxing and without personal risk; the route on the Atlantic could get more risky -this area is one of the most fiercely in the world- and would require much more time, however from the scenery it would be as well fascinating but only in

a different way.

I have got recommendations by friends, the internet sailing forums members and have inquired at the French channel administration itself. Finally we have decided to take the **channel route**. For a while we were also thinking about to transport the boat by truck to the Mediterranean as the quickest and easiest way, however it occurred to be expensive and we would miss the journey. As time did not matter any more because of my retirement, we have finally decided upon the channel route.

In any case, independent of the route to take, it was necessary to make **some improvements** on the boat and to buy some additional equipment.

First of all I had to decide upon a windvane as Vani cannot help much operating the boat. Mostly because of price reasons I have decided for the "**HOLLAND-WINDVANE-BOUVAN**" kit to be fixed together by oneself. I have deplored deeply afterwards to have chosen this. First of all the building was not so easy, the building-manual I have found difficult to understand, I consider it simply as not true that it can be built efficiently with some simple tools and to let the things get welded at the end or only sometimes between.



To specify this on an analogy: A skyscraper can be also built with a shovel and a bottle but it is rarely efficient

In MHO the truth is that building with kit a fully equipped workshop is necessary and a welding machine should be at hand all the time, as there a lot of little things to be welded all the time. After trying to start to build on my own it soon came out that it would be impossible to finish it at all. I was lucky to find Rene who is an experienced

fitter and to make him to do the job with some assistance of myself. Finally it has costed me as much as if I would have bought a proven trademark windvane from a dealer.

I have **bought some additional things**, eg. a second anchor and a battery powered hand GPS., a small outboard motor for our Dingy etc. I have also suggested that the boat should have new antifouling painting which I wanted to make myself in the Houtribhaven, a club Marina in Lelystad, in early 2008. I have gone there end of March without my beloved wife and was crucified first of all by the extreme bad weather, most of the time rainy with temperatures just a little above zero during the days and sometimes frost in the morning with ice on the boat. So the work proceeded with very slow progress only, I had to let go by the constant rain showers when painting and was bothered by the cold, forced to warm up somewhere.



The boat had to come out of the water and the mast had to be demounted for transport by truck by [www.mastransporte.de](http://www.mastransporte.de), Mr. Graf, and orderly packed.

After coming home I said to my wife that I have never frozen in my life so much over a long period.



I have also ordered at the local shop a **windgenerator** to be mounted on and a to be built mast to be ready when coming back to the boat again in two months time. The meanwhile ready made windvane was partly mounted with my help during my presence and should have been finished as well until my return.



Mid of April I had to return to Vienna again because we have sold meanwhile our apartment and had to move to a new one more outside at the city border and we had to move all our things because the flight to Amsterdam was booked for the 27<sup>th</sup> of May. If starting our trip later we would not be able to make the distance in a relaxing and sightseeing manner and the sailing season would have been almost over again. So we were in an extreme hurry, not only that our complete household had to be moved, also the car had to be sold - being on the boat most of the time a year a car is not necessary any more and Vienna has one of the best public transport systems in the world anyway. (Meanwhile I write these lines after being back from the boat again for about two months I actually do not miss a car.)

On May 27<sup>th</sup> we went by plane to Amsterdam, intending to leave for the channels two days later, only the water line would have to be painted which is done within one day.

We were shocked that our brand new outboard motor which was mounted with a solid lock on the boat was stolen in the **Houtribhaven Club Marina**. The lock was opened and placed neatly aside without damage - the key for it had been inside the boat and the boat key had been left at the local repair shop. Who has done that, who has helped oneself so easily ? I have been told by another sailor of the marina, that these thieveries happen once a while even in that club marina, his own boat has been broken in some years ago and a lot of damage done.



I was forced to buy a new motor to be sent from Germany and this was the main reason why we could start with our trip only on June 5<sup>th</sup>. (Without a motor for the dingy cruising in the MED would be almost impossible.)

The windgenerator was not yet mounted in spite of promise and making me scowling, the same as the mounting of the windvane not completed. However, all this did not delay our departure, the to be sent motor was the main bottleneck.

**Finally we left the Ijsselsemeer on June 5<sup>th</sup> at about 10 am** (with the mast and the radar desmounted). "Say never never again" to come back, we left the Netherlands which we wanted to make to our homeland for a while with some sad emotion, because basically we have liked a lot of things there, however above all our emotions were gone forward to some new life, new countries, new people to see, new sailing experiences to make and a lot of more.

