

Foreword

It is now 2017. My name is Torben W Andersen. I am 69 years old. During the last 10 years I have managed to learn to surf.

As it is not common knowledge that you can learn to surf, starting at the age of 59, I have decided to try and spread this information.

I am a long board surfer. I am lying on the board, paddling with my arms. The aim is to "catch" a wave, pop up into a standing position and glide along the front side of the wave.

From there you move on. The variations you can do and the level of difficulty are endless.

It took a while for me to admit that when you start at the age of 59, you are not going to become very good at it. Then I came across the book written by the French Doctor Dr Guillaume Barucq. "Surf Therapie." His book refer to any exercise in the surf zone, and mention the health benefits from this activity.

My book is built from extracts from my surf log over 10 years. Covering more than 1000 days.

I have been reading through the log and used the information that has general interest and interest for the person who like to learn. The log entry can be recognised from the date and place. Example:

8 to 14 November 2009 Sagres Portugal

"quote from logbook" / "unquote logbook"

Sometimes I have added information at the time of writing this book in 2017. That information is mark as follows: Note.

External source for photo and video and log book.

Youtube https://youtu.be/P_rpHN9tId8

Web www.silversurferdude.com

This short book is my story.

Torben

Chapter 1

The sea always fascinated me. The first memory I have of this is when my friend Ole and I dragged the box from a baby pram down to the beach. We were going to check out the “shipping lane” an expression I had heard somewhere, and that had a magical effect on me. Never mind that I did not quite know what it was.

It was not a success story. The pram leaked water and sank even before we got “on board”. I think our luck.

Things continued from there. Next stop was a car inner tube. Years later my friend Peter introduced me to dinghy sailing. And on it went

33 years old I sailed out of my Danish local harbour in a part self-build steel sloop of 9 meters.

The free life cruising around the Mediterranean lasted for a couple of years. Then I was overtaken by the facts of life and got serious involved in working and paying bills for many years.

The late summer 2006 when I was 58 years old I started to suffer from bad health. The start was a pinched nerve in the back. All of a sudden one leg did not quite work anymore. I remember the doctor asking me what type of sport I was practising. When I told him I had not done any sport since school days, I could see in his eyes he was thinking, that it was my own fault.

Over the following month I was recovering with physiotherapy and medication. I started on Pilates and swimming, but then, during the winter I was knocked off my feet again by a serious infection. The antibiotics made me dizzy. I did not feel well at all. I was looking at my “bucket list”

There was only one line there. “Learn to surf!!!”

25 years before I had made a short visit on Hawaii. The island of Oahu. There a friend took me to the beach one day, and with a borrowed body board I caught one wave. One wave! That was all it took to get me hooked.

This was the reason for the line on my “Bucket list” Now was the time to act. I was 59 years old. In the year 2007

It is important when you read the following to remember it is based from the experience of a person being 59 years old, and counting.

The first thing to get was a surf board. They all looked the same to me, long, difficult to transport things. Therefore I settled for an inflatable 8 feet surf board. That was my first mistake. You pump it up with air when you use it.

At the time I was living at Mallorca. I had heard that there were surf able waves. It was however very difficult to get the timing right, because they are not there all the time, and I did not know what to look for and where to look. It was spring time, not the time to look for swell as it is quite rare. And I did not know.

Therefore my first experience was just lying on the board and paddle with my arms. Which I found difficult enough. I kept sliding off. I did not know there is a wax you use on top of the board to prevent this.

Eventually I found some wave. The wake from a fast ferry arriving every night at 20.30. Unfortunately not always on time. I used a body board, and had a good 7 and a half second. Then it was all over, until next evening. The wave form was totally wrong, but I did not know that either. It made me move, that was enough for now.

Summer was arriving. I had an appointment in Denmark for the summer, to see family. There is a bay on the North Sea coast called Cold Hawaii. I knew from google that there was a surf shop as well. That sounded perfect. Cold Hawaii, Klitmoeller, was discovered by the surfers around 1980. Today it is a small surfer colony. The coastline is forming a deep bay at this place, protected by a reef. The place is very popular for wind surfers. What makes this place special is that the surfers are given priority for parking along the water front, and at the best location of all is the local surf club surf house. The surfers are an important contributing factor to this small village economy, and the town council voted to take good care of them

I have had many thoughts about getting there, accommodation and transport of the board and surf Neoprene suit, and off course myself. The solution I used, was to get a caravan and hook it behind the car.

There was one problem, however. I had never driven with a caravan before. Especially the first stretch I feared as it involved a ferry trip and then making land fall in Barcelona during rush hour and almost darkness. Not to mention finding a camping site and making the first time navigation which involves reversing with the caravan.

A good friend had agreed to go with me on the trip. That was great, he even brought 5 kg of smoked ham and 12 bottles of red wine, which unfortunately turned out to be for his own use after the trip.

Everything went well. Doing 600 KM a day. Until this day I have still not broken that record.

I got to my goal, Cold Hawaii in Denmark. Found a camping ground. Unpacked my gear. Pumped up the surf board, and headed towards the beach. I was going to learn this in no time....I thought

Standing on the beach, my blow up surfboard did draw some attention. One asked if it was easy to paddle through the waves. I answered that it was fine, but the truth is I did not know what he meant. I should soon find out.

I walked into the sea from the beach. Then started paddling lying on top of the board. There were some pretty pushy waves with irritating with caps. I paddled all I could for as long as I could, which was not too long anyway. When I was exhausted, I thought it was time to sit on the board and look around for the perfect wave. That is when I noticed I was only 10 meters away from the beach. I started then to suspect that the blow up surf board may not be such a good idea.

The following day one of the other surfers asked me if he could try my board. Then I could borrow his for a while. He told me that he had lived in Hossegor France for several years. In his opinion a real surfer surf 3 times a day. Before work. During lunch break and after work. He looked like a real surfer to me.

He actually managed to surf with the blow up board. That by now was a bit low on air pressure. His verdict was clear, he told me that I would never learn to surf with that thing.

He did seem to have a lot of knowledge about surfing. He looked like a real surfer. Skinny, long arms. I thought that the arms get longer from all the paddling. Broad shoulders and a wild hair. He had an old van and slept on top of his board at night. Surely a person you could trust.

The next day I purchased a Bic Magnum 8 feet 4 in the local surf shop.

Even with my new board, I was not doing any significant progress. After 3 month at the Danish coast I could surf a little lying at my knees, and stand on the board for a few seconds. I started in my mind to blame the quality of the waves. What I needed was some proper ocean swell, then I would be all right.

The nearest place for ocean swell was Bay of Biscay. As the autumn was soon to arrive in Northern Europe, I started heading in that direction.

The first beach I got to in Bay of Biscay, showed no sign of swell, so I went on driving South along the coast. After another couple of days I was just South of Girone River at a place called Sylrac syr Mer, Emely Plage.

It was a beautiful place. I had sea view from my caravan. There was a surf school using the camping as a base. It had to be the right place.

I stayed for 12 days. Some had good swell, some days it was either too big or too small. I learned the hard way that the tide, high and low water is changing the swell. When I moved out from the camping I had had some rides on the surf board, lasting a few seconds. At best.

I could see from the other beginner surfers, that I was not the only one having problems. It was just a lot harder to learn than I had imagined.

Then I did not know what was missing. Still I am not sure I know, but I will try to explain.

As an example, a person is walking along the street. He is not looking at his shoes and telling his feet where to move to and when to move. It is done by muscle memory. Muscles that are normally controlled by you, has the ability to do tasks by themselves, or so it seems.

If you want to ride a bike, ride on horseback, swim, well anything that involves movement, you muscles need to get the adequate memory. The more movements happening at the same time, the longer it takes. The older you are the longer it takes.

It is very difficult to find out how long time it takes for a 59 year person to acquire the muscle memory needed to surf a little. There are very few people starting surfing at that age. Actually I never came across one. There are people surfing at a high age, but they have learned it while young.

In the last years it has started to change. Today there are surf schools that have clients more than 60 years of age. Wanting to learn to surf.

This was an explaining note in the story. I did not think a lot about muscle memory. I had noticed that some swell was a lot easier to surf than other, and some swell you better not even get near.

I continued down the coast to the Spanish boarder, searching for the good swell. The place with a good sand bank or reef that create the waves I like. The place that is uncrowded. A difficult task.

Later I drove across to the Mediterranean. South from Barcelona I found some good spots, and in this area I left the caravan parked on a camping and took the ferry back to Mallorca. I had been on the road for 6 month.

Chapter 2 The year 2008

I had been busy on Mallorca, but towards the end of January I was ready to search for some more wave. I had not yet figured out that on Mallorca you have some fine swell from time to time, but you must be able to understand the swell and wind charts, which I did not know yet.

Instead I had been using google and YouTube. I had seen some great clip from Costa Blanca. The Mediterranean coast line around Alicante. I went back to the mainland, fetched the caravan and headed South along the coast.

On You Tube I had seen some great swell from this coast. What I had not figured out was that when the great swell was there, everybody were out filming and sending their clip to You Tube. When the water I flat. Nobody are filming.

The truth is that the good swell is rare on that coast. The consistency is very low. Mark that word in your surfer language dictionary. Very important.

At a place called Oliva I had some fun. There was a Yacht marina where I could find shelter from the wind, along the break water. I paddled along the breakwater to the end, then out into open water along the coast. I was 500 meters away from the coast I guess. Once away from the shelter of the breakwater the waves were quite big. Say 1 meter, but very bumpy and uneven. They did give a good push, I was standing on the board a few seconds, then falling. Still I thought it was very exciting.

This coast line, and all the way to Gibraltar is very popular for Northern European caravan and motor home people during the winter month. Some places it was difficult to get a pitch on a camping. Santa Pola, 40 Km North of Torrevieja was my turning point, but I have later been passing along the whole coast, several times, for vacation and sightseeing, but never again looking for surf able swell.

On important detail. If you live permanently near a coast with 200 km or more of open sea in front of the beach, you are likely to get surf able waves now and again. It is only a question to know where to look and when.

The 1 st. of April 2008 the caravan was placed in storage, for what I thought would be 2 month, but ended up being about a year.

The rest of the spring I spend time on Mallorca. From time to time there were some waves. I was slowly learning to be at the right place at the right time. I even got a new surf board. It was 9 feet 6 long, 22 and a half inch wide, and 2 tree quarter thick. Only a little rocker. And low weight. The rocker is the curve of the board seen from the side. More rocker, easier to turn, but less speed. You have nose rocker and tail rocker. It is easier to catch a wave with a board with an ample nose rocker. It prevents the board to dig into in the wave. Called pearling.

A local shaper made the board for me. I think on Mallorca he may be the only one making boards. It was a piece of art. Which I did not recognise from the start. Actually it took several years before I realised how good this board was. A board that needed a surfer with at least some experience.

I met the shaper on the beach one day. After I had surfed with the board some month. When I told him what I did not like about the board, not realising that I did not like those things, because I was almost total without experience, I made a big mistake. He never spoke to me again.

It was time for me to find some work. My health was fine again. During the last year I had spent a lot of time in the water. It did not occur to me at the time that all the exercise I got trying to learn to surf, was very good for me. A lot of the time I was in the water manoeuvring the board, pure water aerobics. Sometimes I was in the water 3 times a day. Lying on the board paddling, I have to lift the head and torso, to see where I am going, and distribute the weight. The perfect exercise for back muscles. Paddling out through white water against the waves, is all aerobics.

My trade is as a marine engineer. Sailing with cargo vessels. Pushing red or green bottoms. Maintaining technical stuff. At the time a lot was reported in the news media about piracy attacks off the coast of Somalia. A Suez passage, which is a frequent thing, involved, at the time, passing high risk area. I decided to concentrate on my surfing instead. Some more time.

Galicia at the North West point was the place to go I was told, by my local shaper. When he was still speaking to me. It was now August. Heat waves with 40 deg. C in Central Spain. The area I would have to cross through. I decided to travel with a tent to avoid expensive hotels. One more new experience.

I started with the car loaded to the brim. The new surf board on the roof. After 3 days I arrived at a nice place called Oyambre on The Spanish North coast, in Cantabria. The temperature drops about 10 degree when you are at the coast. Compared with further inland. Great in end of August. The main holiday season over. Camping right at a surf beach. Swell trains, another word for the surf language dictionary, from North West. I had found the perfect spot.

First things I remember very well from this trip. The first day in the water. With the new surf board, and nice looking swell. A wave coming up behind me, paddle, paddle, tail lifting, quick pop up. I was now standing on the board almost on top of the wave. Starting falling forward in front of the wave. Head first.

What went through my head was. How deep is the water in front of the wave? Is the surf fin hitting me? Then after I had fallen into the water, and nothing hit me from the board or the bottom. The next thoughts. "What direction is up?" "Please can I have a bit of fresh air in my lungs?"

It is called a wipe out. Or, going over the falls. A useful word for the surf language dictionary.

The second thing I remember, is the day after some very big waves. The forecast was for reducing size. I was out a bit early, playing it safe on the shore side of the white water. Suddenly the waves were gone. I thought that was good and could paddle further out, even though the breaking zone. Then I was waiting.

Suddenly the waves were back. And surprising big as well. I had read about how to take protective action, and made a turtle roll. A turtle roll is best described by youtubing it. The wave was powerful, and I was using far too much energy to control the board, because I was unexperienced. A second, bigger followed. Then a third, even bigger.

I was getting exhausted by now, and worried, but the situation solved itself. The third wave grabbed me as it was breaking heavenly, and I went over the falls, again.

I just had my first encounter with a set. Again a word for the dictionary.

The third thing that made a lasting impression was the combination of camping and surfing. I was spending quite some time shopping for warmer sleeping bag, insulating pad to have on

top of the very cold air madras and an electric heater to get me warmed up in the morning. On top of that the wet suit was never dry when I had to use it, and that is an awful feeling to get into a cold moist wet suit.

On later trips in same region I found that out of high season there are reasonable pensions, some very nice with kitchen and bbq facilities as well. Another tip is to use one of the many shelters for Santiago Pilgrims. The pilgrims trekking along the coast get good discounts and great meals as well. Sometimes you need to ask for it, and you may not get the discount. Being a surfer.

All good things have an ending and after 3 weeks to this area, that I have later visited countless times, I headed back to my Island of Mallorca.

During the Autumn I was having many surf days on Mallorca. Reading in my log I see I had my first ride along the wall. Surfing parallel to the wave. A proud moment. I was also slowly getting the knowledge where to find good waves.

Chapter 3 The year 2009

This is my 3 rd. season. The progress is slowly. Now I can take off in unbroken water, and I am just getting into turning.

I get up at 6 in the morning. I do bits and bobs all day, and during the evening, several times a week, I go looking for waves. I never had that much energy before. I feel more fit than ever before, and I am heading towards 61 years of age.

The type of surfing I do, I call "leisure surfing. "It is a question to stay fit in an interesting way.

The drawback is that I drive everybody nuts with all the talking about surfing, especially my girlfriend. She is very patient with me, but does not like the long drives and lonely cold beaches.

The caravan had been transported to Oyambre Beach in Cantabria. Surfboard had been shipped with parcel service. (Far cheaper than taking it on the plane as sport equipment). Now it was time to go to get the Atlantic swell.

"Quote logbook"

Up at 03.00 hours. First plane to Madrid and at 13.00 hours we landed in Santander. We picked up the comfortable C4 hire car.

By 17.00 we were installed in the caravan, everything was fine, except that there had been a short in the camping place electric wiring. First night we had all sleeping gear in use. We did not feel any warmer as we have a view to the snow on Pico de Europa.

We had an evening meal at the beach restaurant, looking at the swell, which was just about right, and I was looking forward to next morning and the start of my surfing.

"Unquote logbook"

It was Easter holiday. Sometimes day temperature of only 12 deg. Water temperature 14 deg. staying in the caravan with heating and electricity was paradise compared with a tent. We even had some sun now and again.

The surfing was mixed, but the fact that you can surf every day and several times pleased me. The days passed fast and soon it was time to return to Mallorca. The caravan was left for more use later.

I was realising that it is impossible to learn to surf by yourself. I read books and looked at YouTube. Even bought a surf Dvd. However I felt I needed to speak with somebody. I decided to try a surf school.

"Quote logbook"

10 of May 2009 I was back at the camping in Oyambre.

Now it was my turn. The swell was close to 6 feet. I was eager to get started. A bit too eager. First I found myself standing on the surfboard on top of a 5 foot vertical wall of water. I actually managed to make the drop and landed with a teeth shattering slam. Then the wave broke right on top of me.

Later I was riding the board sitting on the edge like a cowboy riding a bull. That hurt. Then I decided to be more careful.

I had one more session in the afternoon. Called the local surf school to sign up for classes. Tuesday I will be getting 4 hours.

Tuesday 12 May.

Classes started at 11.00 hours and lasted 2 hours. Later 2 hours again in the afternoon. As I suspected I had a few wrong habits already. The teacher from <http://www.surfn soul.com> is very good, and very effective. He could see that I already had a good bit of experience. After pointing out the things I do wrong, we started catching unbroken waves after the first lesson.

This is a great possibility for me to get some high quality tuition, so tomorrow we continue. 2 hours as a private lesson.

Thursday 14 May

I was up at 7 o'clock. Down on the beach at 9. The air temperature was 8 deg and the water 13 deg. Very windy as well, but we are hiding behind a rock headland, and the waves are reduced by a off lying reef. A good storm shelter. And that is what is needed today with winds of more than 30 knots.

It is great with video so you can see your faults. Not that easy to correct them. My pop up is not good enough. My weight distribution on the board is wrong. It is good I eventually took some tuition to point this out.

Friday 15 May.

Offshore the waves are 3 meter. In the storm shelter behind the rock on Oyambre beach, it was down to 1.5 meter. The first hour I was doing white water, working a bit to get the stile right. Later I was tempted to paddle further out, due to the good smooth swell. There I was catching unbroken waves for the rest of the time. It helps a lot now I know how to position myself, what waves to paddle for, and so on. Once you gain speed down the wave, you get this satisfying feeling, mixed with a good injection of adrenaline. Now there is no time to think about stile. You just want to stay on top of the board. Better not think about the many tons of water trying to catch up and give you a "wipe out" During the afternoon I had another session. I am still surprised how much difference it has made with some tuition.

Saturday 16 May 2009.

Rain all day. I had the last session. Still it amazes me with the progress I have done. Now I am catching unbroken waves as never before. Tomorrow is travel day. The surf vacation is over

"Unquote logbook"

I have been coming back to Surfn soul almost every year since once or twice. I noticed this year 2017 that there had been a very big increase in the number of surfers over 50 and 60 as well. Martin from Surfn soul had started with tailor made 50 Plus classes.

During the summer of 2009 I was busy working. I was following as well an exercise program to keep me fit. Several times a day simulating surf pop up on the floor. End of August I started surf classes in Oyambre again. I was showing Martin the teacher the pop up on the beach. He told me it looked good. I then tried to do it catching a wave. For some reason could not do the pop up correctly at all.

That is when my quest to find the pop up technique for older surfers began. It took until 2017 to find a result I liked.

At the time surfing was 99.9 % aimed at younger people. The training followed the pattern to get you on shorter surfboards as fast as possible. Short boards are more suitable for the type of waves you most often find in Europe. The weight of a short board is very low. The chance for you getting injured if the board is hitting you is low.

The 0.1% are people like me that want to explore and learn surfing in an advanced age. I did not know at the time where I was heading, and it should take many years more before I was aware of the possibilities and limitations I had, and the benefits I was having from surfing.

"Quote logbook"

29 August 2009. I am back at Oyambre beach.

I flew to Santander today. The first trip in the water was during the afternoon. I was looking forward to try my new pop up. Unfortunately it did not work. On the beach I do it perfectly. On the board I cannot do it. That was disappointing. Monday I start classes, then I will ask the teacher.

Sunday

At 10 O-Clock I was at the beach. Only a handful of people at that hour. No wind and great silky waves. Later the wind came up. The beach had filled with the Sunday crowd, but red flag was up and the lifeguards were serious about it. Only the surfers were allowed in. I am now using another pop up. It is called the Aussie sprinter technique. I had a look at Wind Guru. The week looks promising. Up to 4.5 metre waves.

Reading this comment from my log book in 2017, I can say that calling 4.5 metre for promising for a beginner is totally wrong, and dangerous as well. In such a situation only consider white water surfing under strict supervision.

Monday.

Today I started classes with our local surf school. Waves are only small. The teacher knew the problem well that there is a difference between making a pop up on the beach, and then try the same on the board. I demonstrated the super pop up. He was impressed. 95 % correct. He said. So I guess that I will not give up yet. 18.00 hours classes finished. Now I was so tired that I could hardly make it back up to the car.

Wednesday

On the beach. The waves does not look a lot. However they were perfect for me. Some 4 feet. Clean silky swell. The best conditions for a learner. I had some good take offs from unbroken waves. Everybody were very impress, included me.

Sunday.

The last day. I was at the beach at 10.00. No wind. 3 feet nice oily looking swell. Just perfect for me. I was catching waves. I was riding the wall for the second time in my life. Not a bad day to end this vacation. Now I am in the airport waiting for the late flight back home

"Unquote logbook"

Back on Mallorca I was getting more surf. The winter month are cold, especially with Mistral wind from The North, so I made some alternations with the car.

"Quote logbook"

Monday and Tuesday 21 and 22 Sep 2009

Both days I went to the North coast. Too much wind. A waste of time because it is a long drive. Inside the car the front passenger seat has been removed. I can change in comfort out of the wind, and during the winter, protected from the cold. Also I can take a short sleep before the drive back. I can store the surf board inside the car, and I leave it there overnight and bring it along. In case some swell is coming. A bigger surf van would be better, but I have only one parking space where I live, and that space is small. If I have passengers along, then the surf board is strapped to the roof rack, and then we still can seat 4 persons in the car. The last step is to get the items out from the car that I do not need. Then I will get a 4 litre thermos bottle to bring some warm water to rinse the salt off. For longer trips a roof box and an OZ tent. And by the way, suitcase is packed, I am returning to Oyambre beach day after tomorrow.

Saturday 26 Sept 2009. Oyambre beach

I was out of Palma with the first flight. Arrived at the camping at 13.00 hours. One hour later I was in the water with the surf board. The waves were not very good. Tomorrow I will try to get up early.

Monday

At 16.00 we met at the beach of Playa de Guerra. The teacher came along with his surfboard into the sea. And that works. He saw at once some faults in my wave catching. Once corrected, I was catching waves like never before. Riding the wall of unbroken water as well, as if I had never done anything else in my life. I was surfing my biggest waves ever. During the day the size had picked up. Tomorrow at 11.00 we continue.

Wednesday and Thursday

The daily routine continues with tuition from 11 until 01 o'clock. Waves are perfect. It is private lessons, I am the only pupil. The instructor is with his own board right next to me. It is very effective and I am learning a lot very quickly

Friday

The last day with instructor. We only had 2 feet swell. Never the less I was surfing the wall.

"Unquote logbook"

8 to 14 November 2009 Sagres Portugal

"Quote logbook"

Monday

We went to a beach near Lagos. The swell was not more than 2 feet at best, but the west coast was too exposed to 3-4 metre swell. Tomorrow the swell will ease off, and we should get a day with more surf.

Tuesday

We drove along the Atlantic coast, looking for some good swell. The first beach we reached after following some dirt tracks. However the wind was still strong, so we drove on, along the coast. After some 50 km. we arrived at another beach. Here we spend all day. The conditions were a bit too complicated for me. After a few try in the unbroken water, I did white water. Very few people around. Sun shining all day.

Wednsday

Another day with an early start. That is 9.30. Again along the Atlantic coast. It was supposed to be a calm day. A lot of white water, but the unbroken waves were too big for me as a beginner. What I learned was to take a dep breath before I was rolled over by a wave, and if in doubt if the wave is going to break then better do the "Eskimo turn". I was using a 9 feet long board for the day.

At low water the waves started to close out, so the rest of the day was relaxing. Sun shine all day.

Thursday

The day of the point breaks. It does not look a lot from a distance, but the swell was big enough. It took some time before I felt comfortable. Well to tell the truth, I thought it was quite complicated. Swell biggish and it was crowded. Sun shining all day

Thursday

The West coast was closed due to high swell. We visited several places on the South coast. Eventually we settled for the beach in Sagres centre. Nothing fantastic, but a lot of take-off and trying to ride a small wave as long as possible. Out in the horizon you could see the swell ride along as small hills. You could tell that a big storm was loose somewhere

Friday

That was a great trip. I met a lot of nice people. In Sagres I was joining a week surf camp with Sagres Natura. Waves every day from beginners and advanced surfers. The more you enter the winter season the higher waves you get. If you never used a surf board before, it is best to start during the summer season. There you have more groups with different levels. We had one group. All had joined one or more courses before.

"Unquote logbook"

6 of December 2009 I have booked a week to Sagres Portugal.

During this week the weather was chilly and unstable. 4 metre swell was making an impressive sights on the West Coast. Our surf guide managed still to find some usable surf. The coast is both West and South facing with many small beaches. Local knowledge can get you surf able swell almost in any weather. The nights are cold. Bring your Merino wool outfit, and you will be all right.

On Mallorca, from 15 December to the end of the year I was having 15 surf days. That is pretty impressive for an island in the Mediterranean.

"Quote logbook"

Saturday 19 Dec 2009

You can see the snow on the mountains. The temperature on the beach was 7 deg. C and it was blowing 25 knots. The water felt a lot warmer. The current took me along the beach, and I had to walk for a while to get back to the car. Arriving there my fingers were so cold and stiff that I could not operate the zip. That followed, that I could not get the car key that I carry in a small water tight bag under the wet suit. Off course nobody around to assist so I had to chew on my fingers to get them to work again. That worked. Once inside the car I got the heating going and was soon comfortable again.

Sunday 20 Dec 2009

This is the 6 th. day in a row I have been surfing. I had to clear the car window from frost before I went to the beach. Air temp only 10 deg, but sun shine all day. I think I was in the water almost 2 hours. I had brought a 5 litre bottle with warm water. Pour it through the collar opening when you get out of the water. Feels great. I stored it in a thermos bag, so it lasted all day.

Sunday 27 Dec 2009.

Today I went to Sa Marina. Seems as if I have lost 2 kg during last 11 days. I will try to get some more surf days. So far I can see tomorrow and day after is good.

"Unquote logbook"

That was the end of 2009. Reading the old log now in 2017, I am impressed with the energy I had. I was doing engineering work as well as surfing and travelling. Where did all this energy come from? Probably from fun exercising. For me this was trying to learn to surf. For other

persons it can be something else. The main thing, in my opinion, is that you are enthusiastic about it, so you are pleased to spend many hours each week getting exercise.

Chapter 4 The year 2010

The year started with a big storm and low temperatures. However I was prepared.

"Quote logbook"

Friday 1 Jan 2010 Mallorca

A storm had been blowing all night with 40 plus knot wind. A 30.000 ton ship that has been sitting at anchor in the bay, lifted anchor yesterday and took to sea for safety. Trees were toppled by the wind. The seaside promenades were full of debris that had been washed onto them. I was driving up and down the coast to find a protected spot. I was just about to give up when I next to Can Pastilla marina saw some surfers. The trick was to stay very close to the pier when paddling out. There was some current there helping as well. Getting back to the beach was no problem. The waves were powerful.

Saturday 9 Jan 2010. Mallorca

One more day with very good conditions. No other surfers around. It is still 5 Deg. C. only. However water temp is 14. So I am fine. My new O'Neil Psycho 2 6/5/3 keeps me warm. Hood and gloves as well. The gloves gives me more paddling power as well. The trick is to heat up the car during the drive to the beach and then change into the Neoprene inside the car. Then I bring some hot tea that I drink. In a thermos bag I have a 5 litre water bottle with hot water. After surfing I pour this inside through the neck opening. If you want the peaks for yourself, then prepare for cold water surfing.

"Unquote logbook"

Monday 18 Jan 2010 Fuerteventura. Surf School

"Quote logbook"

The trip flying down here was with lot of delay. I arrived late and went straight to the surf shop to show my face. They talked about the great waves of more than 6 feet, so I was a bit worried. As it turned out, they have two groups. Experts and beginners. I am in the beginner group - again. We had to wait for the tide and spend some time in the surfboard factory. It turned out, that the shaper who build my board on Mallorca, used to work for Homegrown surf school here on Fuerteventura. Eventually we got down to surfing. The spot was great. It was not the 6 feet side of the island, but a protected part of the coast South of Corralejo. I had a 9 feet 2 inch board and was catching more wave than anybody else.

Tuesday 19 January Fuerteventura

We had a visit to Cotillo on the West Coast. The town is very quiet in January. The beach was partly washed away from prolonged large swell. This place looked difficult for beginners this time a year. With the arrival of spring with less swell, the beach will delivered back by the smaller waves. Then we went to our usual place south from Corralejo. Today it was windier and a powerful break over the reef. I still managed to get through the white water and had lots of fun.

Wednesday 20 January Fuerteventura.

We went to Playa Blanca near the airport. Only small waves, but I learned 2 important things. First is a trick called a backside rail grab. As you take off, grab the right rail with your right hand and this way help to tilt the board. You can make a faster turn and surf the wall, or hold the board better on a steep wave. The other thing was how to make a full turtle roll. If you are right handed, make the roll CV, right rail down. To get back up, hold right hand at the middle of the board rail, continue the roll and when the board has finished the roll you can pull yourself back on top of it. The roll to be done in one movement. Chris was our instructor today. He is a long boarder from Malibu California. Trying to touch, or grab the board rail during take-off, forces you to stay low. Note, you can only use this turn to one side.

Friday 22 January Fuerteventura

The last day. We went to flag beach again. I was using a different board. 8 feet 1 inch x 22 inch and a quarter x 3 inch thick. It has a pointed front and a lot of nose rocker. It worked very well on this fast shore break.

I liked it here on Fuerteventura. Sun every day. Comfortable temperature. And surf every day. Not bad for a January vacations. Homegrown surf school did a good job and the hotel Corralejo Beach is very comfortable. I had the hotel option with half board. The rooms have a refrigerator and if you chose self-catering, a small section can be unlocked, and I guess you find some cooking facilities here.

"Unquote logbook"

Corralejo is mainly a tourist. It is located at the northern tip of Fuerteventura, one of the Canary Islands. The town has a large expat population. The first recorded landing on Fuerteventura, was by Gadifer de la Salle, a French explorer, working for the Kingdom of Castile in 1402. Tourism started a boom in construction in the 1970s. There is a regular ferry connection to Lanzarote. The nearby small Island of Lobos has some good waves from time to time.

Back on Mallorca

"Quote logbook"

Tuesday 23 February 2010

First I was down with a cold for 1 week. Then one week with lower back pain. Today I was out for the first time. As soon I was on the board and started to paddle out, I felt great. I was studying the situation a little. You get a very good work out of every muscle and joint from paddling on a surf board. Jumping to the stand was no problem as well. No pain at all. I was well pleased with the situation.

Thursday 25 February 2010 Mallorca

I went to Paguera. There you find the biggest waves on the SW coast, but it is quite often a closeout you will surf. I realize now, that I stopped going there because the large steep waves scared me. Now it seems that I can surf any wave, or shall we say getting down the wave without crashing. Actually I think I was the one catching most wave this afternoon.

"Unquote logbook"

Sunday 28 Feb 2010 Fuerteventura again.

"Quote logbook"

Corrallejo is a nice place. The surf school I use has a good mix of people. All ages, couples and singles. I feel at home here. There are many schools here. I use <http://www.homegrown.es> they book hotel for me as well. I had a good break through with my surfing here. I managed to look up and see where I am going. This is a must, and it have taken me too long to achieve this. I used to look down at the board. A very bad habit. Just as if looking at your shoes when you walk. The bad habit is broken. My surfing took a quantum leap forward in a few days.

Note. Unfortunately the habit was not broken. I returned to look at the tip of the board for many years more. What did happen was that I was able to catch the wave almost blinded from water spray in my eyes. And today, 2017, I think I look a little around, but I won't go in the direction I look automatically. It takes some foot work, with the 9 foot 2 inch I use. Especially after I fitted it with a nose rider fin in July 2017

"Unquote logbook"

You may ask why I fitted a nose rider fin, am I trying to nose ride? No, I am not, but it gives the board directional stability and a better grip in the water, especially in bumpy, mushy conditions. And believe it or not, the board is much faster.

After this trip I went back to Mallorca. In the month of March you must prepare for changing weather.

"Quote logbook"

Sunday 14 Marts 2010 Mallorca

I was out of bed at 5 o'clock and on the road half hour later. On the North coast it was 3 deg. C and rain. After some sleep in the car, weather started to improve and I had 2 hour good surfing. Then sun came out and, all of a sudden the clouds cleared and we had great spring weather.

"Unquote logbook"

Wednesday 31 Marts 2010 I went back to Fuerteventura

By now the North East trade wind is strong. The best time for surfing with least wind is December to March.

"Quote logbook"

Day 1. We are surfing at Playa Blanca. (East Coast)The wind is onshore and has been for several days. It was hard work to get out. I hold the board at the front and walk out as far as I can. Then I wait for a lull. That is the time to start paddling. If a lot of white-water is coming your way, then try to drift in the water just holding on to the board at the front, and let the waves roll over you. Just wait. Eventually there will be several smaller waves, after each other. That is the time to get onto the board and paddle further out. This is a good way to get out if you have not yet enough muscle power and technique. It is no point to arrive at the line up with aching muscles and general exhausted.

Day 3. We surfed all day at Cotillo. I did not have a lot of luck at first, because it is a beach break. Not easy with a long board. During lunch break I had some very useful instruction from our instructor. Then it was time to try again. I was now starting to catch the waves and ended up with a surf along the wall. That impressed everyone. This is the reason I take surf classes whenever I can.

"Unquote logbook"

24 April 2010 Oyambre Cantabria Surf school with www.surfn soul.com

"Quote logbook"

Day 3: We are suffering from lack of swell. In desperation some are surfing right onto the beach.

Day 4: I have some reflexes that need to be changed to perform better. This is not an easy task.

Day 5: All day on the beach. Sunshine and 20 + deg. C. Waves great. First 3 hours glossy, then some wind came. I was surfing the wall several times. Every day I get 2 hours of tuition, and I start to see good results.

This was my surf day No 249 since I started in the spring 2007.

Day 6: Unfortunately the weather has changed. We had some rain, and more wind as well. I was surfing rather small waves at Pajarito Amarillo beach. First I had some problems to catch the small waves. Then the optimal point was checked and it was found that I should move 1 cm. forward on the board. After that, and a few more tips my instructor helped me apply the right way, then I was catching waves as never before.

"Unquote logbook"

I am back on Mallorca. Taking the wave that come along. Sometimes something I have tried to learn, all of a sudden is possible. The problem of staying low, still took years to solve completely. I first mastered it when I in 2017 designed my own pop up. That I call the easy pop up.

Pop up straight to your feet, for older people can put a lot of strain on the back and hips. If you are not landing balanced on your feet, the reflexes automatically try to correct. This can cause some unwanted sudden movements, and next is a pain, most of the in lower back. Also you can get falls from the board that are uncontrolled.

You see younger people making fantastic falls, wipe-outs. For them it is not a problem. They are more flexible and the boards are lighter.

The best thing for older people is to surf controlled and minimise wipe-outs.

"Quote logbook"

Wednesdays 05 May. Paguera

Only small waves, but great sunshine. I noticed that when I make the drop, I straighten my legs. Several instructors have told me to stay low. All of a sudden I managed, and it felt better. So now I am trying hard to do that every time.

Thursday 06 May. Sa Marina Mallorca

3 Feet swell. Quite clean as well. Just the situation I like. I was doing so well, that people stopped at the beach and looked. After my last surf training in Cantabria, I feel that I now understand how to catch the unbroken wave, make the drop and turn along the wall. I can give the sequence all my concentration. There is no more doubt what to do. Now it is a question to get the reflexes into the backbone.

Note. One of the benefits of use surf schools, is that you get a better idea of the right way and the wrong way. It is difficult, if not impossible to pick this from books and video. You cannot see what you do, being the main problem. It is not all surf schools that put the same weight into correcting all your mistakes, but it is a benefit at least to know as much as possible.

Monday 17 Maj

Back to Sa Marina. Actually too big waves. Difficult to get out through the breakers. I used eventually a rib current to get out. I had noticed the rib many times, but never used it as I was unsure about the strength. It showed to be all right and I was quickly out where the big waves were. A couple of other surfers saw how easy I was getting out and followed. We now had maybe 5 feet waves. Bigger than I have encountered before at this spot. Bumpy however. Eventually I got a reasonable wave back to the shore. Then back to the rib and out again.

Note. Yes. Using rib currents or channels is a big help to get through the breaking zone. Especially if I am using a bigger board. It is amazing to see people with short boards duck diving under the wave. It looks so easy. But they are using short boards with very low volume

Saturday 29 May 2010 Sa Marina.

Today I got the feeling that I could change direction of the board at my own will. Mind you, my board is 9 foot 6 inch. Not easy to turn. The point is however, that without being able to do the first turn (top turn) I will not be able to surf along the wave.

This is what happened. When popping up, I sort of drag the rear foot. That way I get a stance with feet wide apart. The rear foot is just in front of the fin. I tell you, that made a difference.

Until now I have been very keen to get the board horizontal to gain speed. But the reason I am losing speed is because I am running faster than the wave. The board with the full rail in the water cannot turn. I am trying to angle, but continue straight.

With the feet more apart, I think I can shift the weight more quickly and change between turn mode with weight on the rear foot and speed mode with weight on front foot.

I was in the water 3 times and by the end of the day I was worn out.

Note. Different boards have different characteristics when it comes to turning, In general shorter boards are easier to change direction than longer boards. My 9 feet 2 is difficult enough. The BIC Magnum 8 feet 4 inch was a lot easier. I have also a 7 feet board. It is very easy. Longer boards catch more wave than shorter boards. They are easier to paddle than shorter boards, something I really appreciate if I am caught by a rib current and dragged out to sea.

Tuesday 01 June 2010 Sa Marina.

Today I had an important breakthrough. I can now make the top turn. The turn that takes me along the wall just after I do the pop up.

Once I zoom along the wall I move a bit forward to gain speed. Or simply shift the weight to the front foot.

Seems to work every time. I am really getting speed, and I can control where I am going. What a great feeling.

Wednesday 02 June 2010 Sa Marina.

There is still a 3 feet clean swell. I just had to go and try again. Yes, it is true. I can turn the board and surf the wall as I please.

I have been trying to have my rear foot near, or on top of the fin before. However I had the feeling that the board was sinking at the aft end. The reason for this, I can see now, was that I was not surfing unbroken waves, but white-water or the wave was starting to break.

Note. There is a bit of important info here. Bubbly water, white water, has not got the same ability to carry a board as unbroken water. It took me long time to figure that out. I should learn the hard way. In a situation where I was close to drowning, but more about that later

Wednesday 09 June 2010 Paguera.

One of the best days ever. 4 to 6 feet swell. I was doing very well. When I am surfing steep waves with my 9 feet 6 inch long board, it works well if I keep a foot near the tail during the pop up. That way I can make sharp turns. If I am standing at the middle of the board I cannot turn at all. I know I have mentioned this before, but it made a turning point in my surfing, when I started to use this technique, and I feel I am advancing fast now.

I only use above for green water surfing. Surfing white water or breaking waves I am standing near the middle of the board. There is no need to make a turn, because there is no wall to surf.

Note. One thing I should learn later was that it help to give the rail of the board a press down just about the pop up. That way the board is already starting to turn along the wall when you finish the pop up. There is a lot of synchronising to learn. It all need to be done in a fraction of a second. There is no time to think about it. It must happen automatically.

"Unquote logbook"

During August 2010 there was a life change situation.

I told the company that used me as an engineer now and again, that I no longer would be available. The local manager was ask what was going on. He answered as follows.

"My brother just sold his almost new car to go to Hawaii with his surf board. Mr. Andersen is having the same decease. There is no known cure"

I had become a full time surfer.

First I went to Oyambre. I stayed there for the month of September. Surfing almost every day. Living in the caravan on the usual camping site. September is a nice time in this area. You get a few days of rain, but mainly a lot of fine weather. Swell is normally quite good at that time a year. The thermal breeze that can be quite strong during the summer is weakening.

By end of September you start to get some cold spells. Especially in the nearby mountains. It is time to move on.

I was heading for Sagres in Portugal. That is a 1200 km drive with the caravan. The first day was pouring rain. Once I had crossed the mountains, the sun came out and the weather improved a lot.

When I arrived in Sagres it was still full summer. There the autumn starts in the mid November. It is however also the most popular season for surfing and I found it a bit too crowded. There is a camping there, where I placed the caravan. That would be my base for the next 5 years.

Sagres is in my opinion the only place in Europe you can find surf every day during the year. The small town is on a peninsula at the South West point of Portugal. There are a handful of small and large beaches. They are facing from North West to South East. You need to know however, at what time of the tide the swell is surf able. It takes a lot of driving around to figure that out. After I had been around some years, I started to get the hang of it.

The swell is more powerful that the Mediterranean swell. I imagine more Open Ocean makes the difference. Great care is needed for the beginner. There are lots of surf schools around to rent equipment and get tuition.

Living in a small caravan takes a bit getting used to. It is however easy to keep warm and you are nice and dry even during the worst rain. Luckily there was flights every day to Mallorca, from time to time at a much discounted price. I could easily make a vacation on Mallorca.

I stayed in Portugal Sagres until beginning of November. I was using most of the beaches, and took many photos that can be seen here:

http://www.silversurferdude.com/my_diary/my_diary_15.htm

October is a very good month around Sagres, also for the person interested in birds, as this is the time big numbers of big and small birds migrate south.

I stayed on Mallorca for 10 days. An old friend came for his last vacation. He was dying from brain cancer. Still, we had a nice week together. I then drove him to the airport and he flew back to Denmark. I never saw him again. He was only 64 years old.

His name was Ebbe. He was my mentor from my youth. At a time when I was derailed on my education trail, he gave me support. Over the next 3 to 4 years I was working as a car mechanic, panel beater, fitter, and welder, and at the same time building my own 9 meter steel "get away" sailing boat. With his support I eventually had enough experience to continue my education and after more studying end up in a nice job.

By the end of November 2010, I was back in Sagres. By that time the summer is over and autumn has started. You now get the winter waves. They can be very powerful and great care is needed for especial an elderly beginner. Often in the horizon you can see the swell roll by as small hills. They look small because of the distance, but can be 3 to 5 meters.

There are surf forecast web sites that display wave energy:

http://www.surf-forecast.com/breaks/Tonel/forecasts/latest/six_day

My comfort limit after 10 years is 300 KJ for surfing green waves. Surfing white water, which mean the wave has already broken and you are using the rushing foamy wave to push you, the number can be higher.

There are a lot of surf school and surf guides. That is a good way to start. Especially for beginner surfers.

The camping at this time of the year is emptying out. Sagres is a cold place during the winter compared with more East places on The Algarve coast. During the winter you get more motorhomes, as they are allowed to use the big parking at Sagres fort. A windswept place, but still free.

My girlfriend came for a visit in December. That was very nice. I moved out of the caravan and into a small hotel and we went sightseeing together.

I went back to Mallorca just before x-mas. I have started to count the amount of surf days. The first 2 years is based on an estimate. Number now end of year 2010 is 329.

Chapter 5 The year 2011

End of January I came back to Sagres. January is a very quiet month here, with most shops and restaurants closed. The good thing is there is not a lot of other surfers.

I was finding the winter waves difficult, and bought a body board. This is great fun, as you can surf down almost any wave. I did however develop some problems with my left hip that did not like the use of fins. Another time I was caught in a rip current that almost sucked me out of Beliche bay. This is not a good idea as the coast here has 15 metre vertical rocks, outside the beach area

During February, on sunny days, and on the South facing beaches, and other beaches sheltered from the wind, you can start to feel the warmth from the sun. The first people will be seen bathing. The wind however can be very cold, and sometimes the temperature gets down to 5 deg. Centigrade, during the night. The beaches I used the most was Beliche and Mareta.

8 March to 23 March I took a vacation on Mallorca.

After some more surfing around Sagres when I returned, I decided it was time for a trip with the caravan along the West Coast. The 2 April I was under way. At that time the surf schools also started to wake up from the winter sleep and you saw more people on the beaches.

First stop was a camping just north from Aljezur. From her I could easily drive to Arrifana beach. This is a beach protected from the prevailing wind by high rocks. One of the few beaches on the West Coast out of the wind. Of course also very popular. It is a long walk down, but well worth it.

The next destination was Vila Nova de Milfontes. A classic old town with a small fort protecting the river entrance. I saw 2 surfers there, and I was not going to try it out. I found it very difficult coming to a new place. There are issues like submerged rocks, rib currents and car park safety, that you need to sort out. It all takes time.

There is a big beach south from the river mouth. It is protected by a sand bank. The big ocean swell will break at the sand bank a secondary swell will be created in the bay in front of the beach. It looks attractive. The problem is, what to do if you are dragged to sea by the current from the river. The breaking waves at the sand bank are very rough. Maybe I will try one day, with the current running into the river.

There is a good choice of hotels in Vila Nova de Milfontes, and off season some hotel are having a nice buffet lunch and dinner for a very reasonable price. Everything is within walking distance.

During my stay here we had temperatures of 28 deg. Centigrade. And it was only the beginning of April. The weather pattern that creates these high temperatures are when the prevailing North West wind is replaced by South East or East. Then the temperature will increase with 10 degree.

Using the camping in Milfontes as my base, I continued along the coast, visiting the beaches, looking for any signs of other surfers. But saw no one. Not that there were no swell, but only empty beaches.

Next day I went all the way to Porto Covo and Sines. Porto Covo is a nice small town on the coast. Very popular as a motorhome parking, where big dedicated areas are allocated for them, or they think they are. Not sure.

Sines is a big harbour, and at the South part of town there is a very big PowerStation. In front of the PowerStation there is a pier. Properly protecting the cooling water piping.

The harbour is giving some protection from wind and swell. The pier more shelter. From the pier and further South there is a long beach. And lots and lots of parking along the beach. The beach is busy during the summer by holidaymakers. The rest of the year this place is very empty.

So when there is a long period of 2 meter swell on the West coast. Too big for comfort at the West facing beaches around Sagres. Too small to get around Cabo Sao Vicente. Everybody packed in Beliche, Arrifana packed as well. Then the beaches South of Sines and the river mouth of Milfontes may be worth a look. I have been surfing by the PowerStation of Sines and it was quite good. And not crowded at all.

Back in the caravan I was getting swell hungry. This strange feeling that you just have to find some swell. This could be "cold turkey" from the adrenalin rush that you by now may have started to like. A sensation described by many surfers.

My next stop was back towards Sagres, but not without a stop at Arrifana, where I rushed into the water with my board and surfed a slightly too big clean swell. It was great.

Back in Sagres 10 of April. Now it was returning to the daily routine

"quote logbook"

12 April 2011 Tuesday - Sagres. The usual routine. Get up with the birds. Find a beach, it was Beliche again today. Surf for an hour. Eat a bit. Surf another hour. Head for the coffee shop to use internet. Menu Del dia. By 17.00 hours, start second session, but I think I will skip that today.

I was just passing Mareta in the afternoon. God waves. So I had to give it a try.

22 April 2011 Friday - Sagres. I have had 2 good days at Mareta beach. I am still in my forward position on the board. When I am lying on the board with the feet on the board together, chest down on the board, arms dangling down in the water, then the front tip is just out of the water and the board feels unstable. As soon as I paddle a little the board gets stable.

Before the wave starts lifting the board I have already done 3 to 5 paddle strokes, so the board is gliding. As the board starts lifting I manage to get a couple of extra power paddle strokes.

I am as far out as I possibly can, and I look for the waves that are 75 % size of the biggest. This is what works for me at the moment with my 8 feet 4 inch BIC board. A WORD of warning. Moving forward on the board, will for a beginner surfer lead to pearling. The board is nose-diving under the water. You may even be flipped 180 degree and land on your back. Make sure to get proper guidance from your surf instructor, before you experience with your position on the board.

I go straight down the face of the wave. Then I angle as much as the rushing white water behind me allows. It is seldom I catch the wave at the right point. But with a good start down an unbroken wave, I can often stay in the front of the white water all the way to the beach. I trim the board with small steps. Keep the nose down. That makes the board speed up.

03 May 2011 Tuesday - Sagres. This last month has been very good. I feel that I have moved a lot. I am surfing bigger waves. I have more speed.

It is not that I deliberately have been looking for bigger waves, on the contrary. I have been looking for smaller easy waves, where I could catch 20 - 30 waves in one day. It is as if that have been giving me some good reflexes. I am more relaxed.

End of May I plan to be back. Then I will stay here around Sagres for some weeks, and then i will make a trip along the coast to the North.

"unquote logbook"

While I was trying to improve my surfing every day there was one thing that I had as an extra benefit. According to the book by French Doctor Dr Guillaume Barucq. Surf Therapie. I was living a very healthy life. I did not even know the book existed at this time. It should take two years more before I saw it.

I was back in Sagres 14 June to 8 of December 2011. During the period I went on short trips to Mallorca about every month. I found that after a month of surfing it was good for the muscles to get a week rest. Then I was ready again.

In July I got a new surf board. It is a soft top type. The top and the rails are covered with a soft thin material. The length is 9 feet 2 inch. Almost 3 inch wide, and close to 3 inch thick. The front has an ample curve. Called forward rocker. This gives the board a better ability to prevent digging into the front of the wave, when you are starting down the wave. The digging into the wave is called pearling. It is the easiest board to surf with of the 3 other boards I have had so far. Still in 2017 I am using this board. It is not as fast as the fibreglass board or the BIC board. It is not easy to make sharp turns with this board, but I am not even getting close to needing this. I can however navigate enough to decide more or less where I am heading. Useful because there seem to be getting more and more surfers every year.

"Quote from logbook"

10 September 2011 Saturday Day 432

This morning I had a demonstration what surfing a long board is all about. I was at Cordoama. First one out. Great waves for a longer board. As i started to catch wave other surfers started to come out. One of them was a smallish girl with a sort of long board. She was catching wave after wave, and I started looking and learning.

What was surprising me most is, that she was using very little power to catch the wave. She was however looking a lot at the wave, and she seem to catch waves at the right point, just next to the breaking point. Then she was doing the pop up, the board so high on the wave that I thought the board would not move forward. But it did. Slowly gaining speed, already angling down the wave.

I have been reading so many places that you paddle all you can. So for 431 days I have been paddling all I can. I have shoulders so wide now, that I have angle to get through a normal size door, because all this paddling. I am paddling so hard that I do not see where i am going, and I do not see how the wave developed. Looking at this demonstration, with what ease and grace you can catch a wave gave me something to think about.

"Unquote logbook"

Today when I am reading in the log at <http://www.silversurferdude.com>, I can see that I was out and around almost every day. The benefit of living in a caravan is that you do not feel like being "home" all day. Now in 2017 I live in apartment in Sagres, and it is tempting to be cosy at home if the surf is not very good, I do not go looking for surf all day.

Maybe I should look into changing that, because even if the surf is bad, then a good 30 minute walk along the beach is what you need as a minimum, every day, according to the book Surf Therapie

I did get some back ache on occasion during this year. Especially after a month of surfing. But the serious attacks where I am bedridden for a couple of days, and the slowly crawl back to normal were gone for now. Now and again I did wrong movements and had this sudden sting of pain, that I think everybody have tried, but I recovered very quickly. Normally within a day or two. Sometimes I could be completely free even from a slight aching for month.

Migraine attacks were becoming less frequent. I could not complain. About this life.

After I was back on Mallorca the 9 th of December, I had 12 more surf days. Some of the days in great silky swell. Lots of sun shine as well.

I ended the year 2011 with total surf days at 479 days.

Chapter 6 The year 2012

The first month of the year I was on Mallorca. Surfing whenever there was a chance. I was doing quite well with the Mediterranean swell. It is most often less powerful than similar swell height in Sagres Portugal. I was 24 of March before I was back in the caravan in Portugal.

I wanted to travel more this year. Surfers always think that there are better swell to be found elsewhere. I had my eyes on the Portuguese West Coast

In April I made a test trip to Sines and back.

First stop was Zambujeira, 70 Km North from Sagres. In the same area there is a very large eco camping named zmar. It is very big. Indoor and outdoor pool and a fantastic buffet dinner. All brand new. S.Torpe near Sines was next stop, then back to Sagres.

Everything was working well. I was ready for the summer trip.

June 1 2012 I started the trip along the Atlantic coast. In between these trips I was surfing in the Sagres area. My surf count went to 525 days.

I reaches S.Torpe the first day. Temperature was 30 deg. I went straight to the beach. Then next morning I went on, and in the evening I was in Nazare. Around that time this place was new on the big surfing world map.

It was no secret that sometimes at North shore in Nazare a huge wave would be seen, when big Atlantic swell was hitting the coast. There is a deep canyon that will build a wave 3 to 4 times the average swell. The question was, could it be surfed.

At the town hall some of the employees were body boarders. They arranged for an invitation to the then best known big wave surfer Garret McNamara. He was on the forefront with new ways of surfing and new equipment. Tow in surfing.

The surfer is being towed by a jet ski. At the right place he will let go of the tow line and surf the wave standing on the surf board. The board has foot straps, and the surfer is using body armour that also doubles as floating device, and one or two life west that can be inflated, in case of him being buried by the wave breaking on top of him.

What is happening when a wave is breaking, is that a lot of air bubbles are created. Water with air bubbles does not have enough buoyancy to let the human body surface. You will sink deeper and deeper.

The inflation devices will help the surfer to reach the surface, but the next wave is already building and will bury him again.

For this scenario there are 1 or 2 rescue Jet Ski stand by. Once they see the surfer is in trouble, their job is to get to him as he is surfacing, and get him to safety before the next wave is breaking. Surfing big waves using tow in is team work, and you need people with skills, and people you trust.

Over the following years McNamara returned several times and made 2 world records in Nazare. One very close to go through the magic 100 feet of wave hight.

The surfer lying on the board, paddling with his arms to get the speed to catch the wave, use another technique should he go over the falls and sink deep into the white water. It is called

“climbing the leach” The leach is the string connecting you to the surf board. Usually attached to your ankle or just above your knee.

You are sinking into the white water after a wipe out, you do not know what is up or down. Now. Get the leach with both hands and climb up the leach like you are climbing a rope hanging from a tree. The board has a buoyancy of 50 litres or more. It will still be at the surface. But only just. It may tilt with the tip up. In this position the board is called a “tombstone”

The reason I mention how you “climb the leach” is because even in small swell it may come in handy.

One day on The West coast near Sagres I was surfing with a group of younger surfers. They liked wave size as big as possible. I should not have stayed. A 1.5 meter wave caught me in a large amount of white water. I was sinking into the white deep. When I tried to swim back to the surface, nothing happened. This is when panic starts.

I was lucky. Suddenly I remembered a video clip I had seen with Jeff Clarke telling about his surfing at Mavericks. A large wave in North California. He was telling how he often have had to “climb the leach”. At the time I did not understand the meaning.

Now I was sinking into the white water. I saw the video inside my head, and I suddenly understood.

Next day I drove on to Figuera de Foz. I was looking at the different beaches in the area, but did not find anything that looked easy enough. There are lots of places that look like good surf places, but my lack of local knowledge kept me ashore. In 2017 I was passing by as well, and my observation was the same. Lots of possible places. No crowd. I saw 3 surfers on this endless beach.

The camping site I used, is called Orbitur Gala. There is a gate and a foot path to the beach. It is a beach to the open ocean and not children friendly. Just behind the harbour breakwater there is another camping called Fos do Mondego. Also here is the surf bar as well. I guess this is the better place for surfing. The camping Mondego is a bit rough, without any trees to give shadow. You are however in walking distance from the surf spot.

Barra beach, where I went the next day, is in an area called Costa Nova not far from Aveiro. The beach is protected by a huge break water construction. By now there was little swell, so no surfing again. There are a lot of camping sites in the area, but I did notice that sometimes, even if there was direct access to the beach, this was locked. Apparently because there was no life guard.

"Quote logbook"

5 June 2012.

Just arriving Orbitur Rio Alto Camping. It is ok, and has access to the beach. It is a long stretch of open beach. I think some driving is needed.

7 June.

After some searching I found a decent surf spot in Fao - Ofir . Just South from the river. Good parking and some Jetties. There is a camping in Fao as well, but where I am now in Orbitur Rio Alto I like more.

The waves looked a bit too big for me, but I will be back. It does look however that the swell size over the following days can be a problem.

8 - 14 June.

Marianne is visiting. We are scouting the beaches North of Porto, all the way to Vigo in Spain. Even if the weather is windy and several days with rain, we do come across some very nice places.

Right next to the river mouth of Porto we saw several surfers. I will not guarantee the quality of the water. Porto is worth a visit.

Further north we found the best place. The city beach of Povia de Varzim. Empty from swimmers during mid-June. Two surfers were catching some good wave here. Nice swell, good beach bars. Ridiculous prices. Café con leche Index at 1 Euro in a smart beach bar with deep chairs. Mind you during July, August and September it may be that the beach goers will take over.

Agucadoura is a funny old fashioned town. Very quiet. However on the beach you find parking and what I think looked like good waves. Completely empty. This name you will find in some of the surf guides.

I am still a beginner and cautious, so I do no venture into unknown waters with sizeable waves, but it looked good.

Ofir beach further north has two break waters to protect the beach. Here we saw surfers several times. Nice parking and a couple of restaurants where you sit protected from the wind and have great local food at a very reasonable price.

We went to Viana do Castelo beach, just south of the river. Here are several camping sites. It was windy and rain. The kite surfers were having a great time.

Afife beach 10 Km further North is a quiet small town. Filling up during the summer month.

Moledo beach is at the border to Spain. Protected as it is in the river mouth. Very quiet during mid-June. A nice parking by the beach, where you can look across to Spain and the old fortress in the river.

Heading south again 14 June 2012. I had read about a place called Furadouro, on the internet, some 40 Km. South of Porto. There I found a surf shop, surf school. Couple of break waters to hold the beach in place. Unfortunately the surfing for the day was done in the morning, due to tide level.

There is a very big camp site. 330.000 square meters. A part is reserved for nomads. There you find very nice shadow from tall trees, and very few occupants in that section. The sanitary is very good. The price reflect the local marked, very reasonable. Looks like lots of entertainment during high season. Calculating from the big outdoor stage.

The town is not very big, but I guess it will fill up over the summer.

15 June.

And I arrive at Peniche. I had a look at one of the beaches. The one in front of Municipal Camping. Within walking distance. Which is a rare thing.

16 June 2012 Saturday Day 524

Peniche North facing beach.. The morning session was very good. 4 feet swell and a weak offshore wind. I was catching wave until my arms felt like rubber. Surfing from the line-up, right to the beach.

In the evening I went to the beach again, but the waves were not good. It is great that you can just walk to the beach. The weather was overcast first, and a bit of rain. Later sparkling sunshine and dry air. Inside the caravan it was 27 deg. C with all windows open. The camping has a small cafeteria. Cafe con Leche is 90 cent.

During my stay in Peniche I developed an eye condition called PVD. Nothing special, but it may involve reduced sport activity for days or weeks.

After a check by an eye doc in Lisbon, I returned to Sagres with the caravan. Sagres camping was having few guest. The main holiday season has not started. The North wind was blowing keeping you cool. 20.00 hour s 18 Deg. C

22 of June.

I flew to Mallorca to get an extra examination and more advice

28. June 2012.

Examination show I am fit and ready for surf again. Ticket to Faro booked. Plan return 6 of July. Palma de Mallorca is heat wave condition with 28 deg. C in my bedroom at 03.00 at night.

06 July 2012

Back in Sagres. Sun, but windy. Temp at 21.00 h is 19 Deg. C It will be great to sleep under the duvet, and maybe even a blanket on top.

"Unquote logbook"

I was staying in Sagres area until 19 December. After a month of surfing I would take a trip to Mallorca.

I had started to think, how I could go to other European places and check the beaches. What worried me was driving with a caravan in the summer heat through Spain. Having to wait in line at crowded camping to check in and out. I do not like a lot to stay at hotels. You can feel very lonely, let alone the high prices if you use hotel every night.

End of year surf count 609 days. 130 days in this year

Chapter 7 The year 2013

The first part of the year was the usual routine. Surfing a month at the beaches around Sagres. 1 or 2 week vacations on Mallorca. I was still driving around a lot to look at different beaches around Sagres, every day. Simply I did not know at what state of the tide the waves were best at the different beaches.

I had decided to try and go camping using a tent. For this I got a 6 man tent. That way I could have a table and chair inside the tent. This I thought would be nice during the evenings. I used 2 sleeping mats, one on top of the other. Tied together. Add to this all the other bits and pieces you think you need. The car was packed to the brim when I took off the 16 of July.

I would not call the trip a success. The tent was too big to handle for one person. If I was hit by strong wind I was sure that I would fly away. I never tried the tent in rainy conditions, which was properly a good idea. But I came to some nice places where I have never been before.

One of these places was a underground garage is Santiago de Compostella. When I was driving through town looking for the campground, following the GPS, it started saying to turn right, eventually I did. It was the entrance to an underground parking. It was not a problem, I just went through and out again. But I did think, what a mess it would have been with the caravan in tow.

I wanted to go to Galicia for many years. Now I was here.

It was very small swell, so I was mainly driving along the coast and looking at different places.

Cabo Finisterre, believed in Roman time to be the end of the world. Razo beach not far from La Coruña, where I saw a surf school claiming being the oldest in Spain.

I must admit that I did not even use the surf board once on this trip. I always wanted to go to Galicien for the surfing, once here I thought it looked a little complicated. I need to admit that I prefer beaches that I know.

23 of July I was back in Sagres and the old routine started again. The summer passed with the usual crowds and a bit of parking problems at some of the beaches, unless you were early.

However the same routine every day, even if it a very healthy one eventually becomes boring and 2 of September 2013 the car was loaded to the brim again and I was heading for Oyambre to join the Surfnsoul surf school for a week.

I started in Sagres in 35 deg. and 4 days later I arrived in Oyambre in 18 deg. and pouring rain.

Using the tent did not look like a good idea. I found a hotel instead.

I stayed in Oyambre for a week. The swell was very good. I was getting tuition and time was passing fast. The return trip was via Santiago de Compostella and then south following the Portugal coast. Once more I tried the tent. It was comfortable but too difficult to set up alone. In a windy condition properly impossible.

Back in Sagres I got into the usual routine. The weather is very stable, with a lot of sunshine until mid-November. This is the most popular month by visiting surfers. The water is pleasant warm, around 18 deg. Then the weather is changing. Often suddenly. The temperature can drop 10 degree or more from one day to another. The rest of the year there are still sunny days, but also rain and the summer heat is definitely over.

At the camping people will use tents until mid-October. After that you see only caravans and motorhomes. Having said that, you see the odd camper all year. People on cycling trips mainly. Sporty type of people.

Some may wonder how I can spend so much time surfing. The answer is, that it make me feel good. It can be a bit uncomfortable to dress up at a cold beach, but when you return after a good exercise that may even have been exiting, you feel good. Sometimes when I return to my caravan, it is already dark. Small jobs are needed, like rinsing the surf suit, filling water in the tanks and storing the shopping. The moon may be out. There can be stars. I feel great and think. Wow, I am alive. I feel alive. Life is great.

During 2013 I was spending over 200 day in my caravan. It has a floor area of 6, 4 square meters.

I was staying the end of year on Mallorca . Surf count is now at 763 days. 154 days during this year.

Chapter 8 The year 2014

During the winter month, especially in January, some severe storms passed over Portugal. Our beach bars were taken by the sea. So were the sand on many of the beaches. It looked very strange. I never thought the sand would come back, but it did.

I had been preparing for a longer trip during the summer. I would leave in May and return in October. The destination was the west coast of Norway. A place called Hoddavika. A beach protected from the wind by small mountains. There was a surf school and a camping site. It was almost 4000 km away. So it had to be a good place.

First I made a trip to another place I had read about. El Palmer, costa de Luz. Near Cadiz on the south coast of Spain.

The 19 February I left Sagres with the caravan in tow after the car. Along the Algarve coast I stopped a few places to have a look, without finding anything of interest. It is a coast line with a lot of hotels and flats for holiday makers.

The next stop was Isla Christina. This is now Spain. Looking at the map, it should have the potential for some swell, but I never saw any. The next step was the 300 km to El Palmer going through Seville. The traffic in Seville is interesting. There are several intersections where you have to get across several lanes to get to the right exit. I was lucky to have a new GPS so my chart was updated. Later I found that it is a lot nicer to plan your trip so you pass through Seville during a Sunday.

"Quote from logbook"

21 Feb 2014

A 300 Km trip, and I was at El Palmer beach. Between Cadiz and Tarifa. Lot of swell here. Too much actually. El Palmer is a great place. Surfs hops, Bars and Restaurants. Some nicely built. Some more drift wood style. A place that may not survive the Lay de Costa Inspectors and their Magic Wand. The El Palmer camping is well maintained. With real green grass. The bath rooms are built in Al Hambra style

22 Feb Saturday 2014

I surfed today at El Palmer beach. The waves looked very big at first, but there was a surf school out, so I thought I could manage as well. I checked several beaches during the day. I finished a splendid, sunny day with a coffee and some cake. Tomorrow it is up early.

22 Feb Saturday 2014

I am not having a lot of luck with my surf here. There are big waves, but it is windy and a bit rough for me.

24 Feb 2014

Looking around again today. Fuente de Gallo is a very nice area. 1 surfer out. It is located just outside Conil.

"Unquote logbook"

Exactly, Fuente de Gallo is the protected beach where you should go during bigish westerly wind and swell. I have been there several times later, and it is a very good place. Unfortunately this stretch can get quite a bit of east wind. A strong wind that messes everything up. During the winter the east wind often bring rain as well. Lots of rain on occasion.

This stretch of coast is still quite unspoilt. Conil, El Palmer, Trafalgar. Las Canons de Meca and eventually the famous kiting beach at Tarifa. It is also one of the cheaper places on the Spanish coast.

On the return trip to Sagres, I went inland, into the Atlentejo district to a place called Castro Verde. A small town about 100 Km from the Algarve coast in Portugal. Very good municipal camping and an interesting town with many old houses, built in a style so you get the impression that it used to be a quite rich area. There is an old wind mill also. Total restored.

When I was standing looking at it, some old guys came and gave me a demonstration. They turned the sail covered wings into the right direction and the whole thing came alive. The pavement was shaking, and they had a good laugh. I was shown around inside the mill. Stone turning around. A handful of grain and flour came out. Everything in perfect condition. Ready to go.

There are lots and lots of these small and bigger towns in the Atlentejo region. Some of the places build on hilltops and the medieval castle nicely renovated. Also a lot of the old farms has been converted into rural hotels. Often with good taste and an eye for the old style of building. Timing is important as it is very hot during the summer month.

Once back in Sagres I started to prepare for the summer trip. In between I did a lot of surfing. "4 of May I was ready and lifted the anchor.

Below are the quote from the logbook. With driving details, camping sites used, distance between camping sites, and so on. Very dry and boring information, unless you are planning a road trip through Europe from North to South, or opposite.

"Quote logbook"

On the following page I keep the driving information, so I easily can find my way back. Sounds like a joke, but it is not. In September the days are getting shorter, and you want to make sure that the camping you are heading for is there. No fun driving around with a caravan searching after dark.

24 May 2014...

The first Camping I used, after leaving Sagres, was Camping Giralda Isla Christina near Huelva in Spain It is an ASCI site. Date 24 May 2014...

Leave the motorway at exit 117. Do not go through Isla Christina nor Lepa

Following day Tentudia on the A66. Making sure I was on the parallel N/630 between junction 730 and 722. Midway there is a tunnel under the motorway that leads to the camping. My GPS got it wrong, but I had been there before and had learned the lesson. Use the tunnel. There are other roads leading there, but they are very bad quality. Also I had brought provisions. There is a bar there, but limited what you can get.

26 May. Las Cañadas. Baños de Montemayor. I like this camping. Big parking in front. Good restaurant. A/66 exit 436. Between Placentia and Salamanca.

27 May Cubillas A 62 exit 102. Very easy to find. Just next to motorway. Between Valladolid and Palencia.

28 May arrive at San Vicente de Baquera. Camping Rosal. This camping is walking distance from a surf spot. In Oyambre there is another camping with direct access to the beach.

I did not have any luck with the swell. It was flat calm. And for 6 days more.

30 May. I move on to Zarautz. Gran Camping. Great view. Use Exit 11 on the E-70. Go through 2 round about. Big sign at 2 nd roundabout. Uphill on a small road and you are there

31 May Arrive at Camping Ferme Erromardie Km 50. Situated at Plage d 'Erromardie. 2 Km North of Saint Jean de Luz, just over the border from Spain. Quite a few units occupied. I would not expect to get a place here during high season.

Use exit Saint Jean de Luz North. Then drive back towards St Jean on D 810 about 1 kilometre. Ignore the road to the right just as you enter on D810. When you arrive at a small roundabout after passing the rail line, then take the road very sharp right. There is a sign with the name of the camping. Do not enter the parking area at the reception, unless you can turn around and get out. Difficult with a big caravan. Just park on the road outside. I is a dead end road anyway, just leading to the parking by the beach.

It is likely that you have to enter the camping at some of the gates further down the road.

It is a great camping .Good walking along the coast. Free WI Fi. It is also ASCI 14

There is a Municipal Camping as well, to get to it you must enter the beach from North. You cannot pass in front of the beach.

To Les Tourterelles at Saint-Girons Plage Km 91

1 June 2014. I have moved on to Les Tourterelles at Saint-Girons plage. Take the road to the beach from Vielle Saint Girons. It is 80 Km North of Biarritz. Only a small place with 2 camping and a handful of houses by the beach. I will not be quiet during July August. The camping is very big.

So, les Tourterelles is by the beach with direct access. Mind you, you have to climb a sand dune of considerable height.

To get there drive all the way towards the beach until you come to a roundabout. Here turn right. There are parking reserved for you while you check in. Get a pitch very close to the bar by the swimming pool if you want internet on the pitch. I ended up on 595, but I will try and change to 556 to increase signal for internet. The smaller pitches 404 to 420 has a lot of shade.

1 of June very quiet. Bar and supermarket closed. Nearest supermarket is 5 - 9 Km away. Pitches are very big. All very open.

Internet on camping turned out to be bad and expensive. I ordered online a sim card from LeFranceMobile. You can order from your home country before u leave. Else camping is very good with paved walk until the beach. And good surf as well.

14 Juni. To Camping Soulac Plage at Emily Plage Km 232

I transfer to Camping Soulac Plage at Emily Plage 5 km south from Soulac syr Mer. I was here 7 years ago. There are no more pitches with sea view, and the beach has suffered greatly from the winter storms. However there is a new indoor outdoor swimming pool.

To find the place take the road to Emily Plage. Then just before you drive onto the beach turn left, and u are there. Do not drive all the way to reception, there I not enough parking space.

It is now mainly a campsite with cabins, but there are some pitches for camping as well

16 June 2014. From Emily to La Motte 230 Km ASCI

I took the ferry from Surlac to Ryan. Then along A10 and then along A83 towards Nantes. Use exit 5 on A83 to get to Camping La Motte. The road to the camping is just as you leave the small village Vendrennes. The sign is very small.

The camping is pleasant enough. Big pitch and high hedges. I did not find the area too exiting however. Open all year. Good transit place. Big parking outside gate.

17 June 2014. From La Motte to the Megalit 230 Km ASCI

The Megalit is between Vannes and Lorient on the SW coast of Brittany. The sign leading to the camping is very small. Easily missed.

18 Juni 2014 To Camping La Corniche 115 Km

A Camping Cheque place very near to the town of Plozevet. The older part of camping has nice big trees for shade. A couple of very fine beaches within 5 km. A bit far away from the dual carriage way. Next time I will pick another camping some more south. That is where the super long sand beach is. Camping with privacy and shade

19 June 2014. 150 Km. Using dual lane most of the way. Going through Brest.

To Camping de Trologot in Saint Pol de Leon. This is an interesting place on Brittany's North coast. Not far from Roscoff. Ferry to Plymouth and Ireland.

I had not been looking very good at the map, and I ended up with a long search for the camping. The GPS was leading me through the centre of town, which is wrong. But I saw a big truck trying the same, so it was a Gps thing.

I was asking for direction. Something like me in French "Are you the camping" The other answered in broken English" No. I am a passenger" Guess he meant passing by. Eventually an English couple showed me a way. But it was more like a bike lane. Hurray for small caravans.

Looking around, once installed, I saw that there is another camping with a better location. Especially if you can get a pitch with sea view.

Camping de Trologot is fine, but pitches are quite open. I am behind my plan, so this is goodbye to Brittany and heading for Normandy

20 June 2014. To Camping Marwan Village Haliotis 215 Km

This excellent camping is situated in the town Pontorson. Easy to find. It is a CC page 55. Close to Le Mont St Michel. 48deg 33 min 24 sec N 1deg 30 min 51 sec W. Free internet for 3 hours. At least.

The road I followed around the coast of Brittany for the last days, was a sort of 4 lane road. Very few Aires for stopping. I noticed that the truckers parked in the small lay by where the emergency telephones are. Some with the curtains drawn, having a sleep. Price 1 CC 16 E

21 June. To Camping St Claire 305 Km

Fine camping located very close to motorway from Calais (250 km) and Holland. Filling up quickly. Today I saw they had the full sign out. I had made an e-mail enquiry and they answered they were full. I did not see the mail, so went there anyway. At 15.00 hours I got in. www.camping-sainte-claire.com tel. 02 35 93 03 93 fancelot@wanadoo.fr.

Big supermarket. Little and Norauto nearby.

Road from Le Havre and 90 Km direction Calais, is not too busy. It is toll road. There are several good Aires for stopping.

From Caen to Le Havre was also part toll road. More traffic. A couple of good Aires, but packed as it was Sunday.

22 June. To Camping Le Redin 105 KM. Camping Cheque

Situated in the Bay of Somme. Easy to find. I just followed the GPS. I had booked in advance with my CC card, which was good as the site was pretty much full. The beach is 2 Km away. But the water can be even further a couple of kilometres away at low water. Price 1 CC 16 E

23 June. To Ter Duinen 205 Km Camping Cheque

Situated along the coast in a town called De Haan. It is 20 Km SW from Oostende. Walking distance to the beach. I saw that at the following town towards Oostende there are a camping right at the beach.

The beach is endless, but it was quite windy so not many people. Still sun shine every day.

Internet 1 E 30 minutes. 1 Month 35 Euro. Then it can be used at several campsites.

Good motorway without too much traffic to get here. Some toll rd.

24 June. To Deverhoeve Camping Cheque 100 Km

First I had to get around Oostende and Zeebrugge. No problem as such. The roads are very narrow and there is a lot of heavy traffic, so you just move along with 50 Km / Hour.

Then I headed for WesterSchelde tunnel. It is 6 Km long and cost 7 Euro. Then I was at the most South island off the Zeeland. On the Northern end I found Camping Deverhoeve. A very nice camping. Free fast internet. Using the tunnel you avoid Antwerp.

Getting there is through the village and not as my GPS suggested, a left turn after the village. Though it is possible also. Price 1 CC 16 E

25 June. To Kijkduin Camping Cheque 120 Km

Today I was following the smaller roads across the islands, heading for Benelux tunnel and then to Den Hag.

I missed the tunnel and took a small ferry across Rotterdam harbour. It is actually a better route. Then on to Kijkduin camping, which is 300 meters from the beach.

Quite a lot of people. It is a very big camping. Internet 4 Euro for 4 days. It does not cover the whole site.

Leaving the camping, going in direction of Utrecht, I made a small mistake. The GPS was in normal car mode. So I went through the centre of Den Hag. Which was actually not a big problem.

The right way to get away from Den Hag is, after leaving the camping, to take a right in Kijkduin. Price 20 E

01 July. To Wildhoeve. Camping Cheque 130 Km

Situated between Utrecht in direction to Groningen. After Amersfoort there are 2 choices to get to Zwolle. A28 or A50. The latter is longer, but the part on secondary roads to get the last end to the camping is a lot shorter. Once on the secondary roads, minimal traffic.

The camping is situated in a big forest. You must park your car outside after you place your caravan in position. Big indoor pool. www.wildhoeve.nl 5 star. Internet 5 E 24 Hour. Very good and fast.

02 July. To Strandheem Camping Cheque 140 Km

West from Groningen. Along the A7, and close by as well. Very big. A lot of empty pitches. Easy to find. Small shop next to reception, that seem to close a 5, which I find a big early. Big parking outside. www.strandheem.nl

Very good free internet. Wi-Fi at the reception. I was at section B4 and had very good internet there as well. Price 1 CC 16 E

04 July To Feriecentrum Heidenau ASCI Km 150

Very big camping in 21258 Heidenau. Once you enter the village there are good signs. Only 5 Km from A1. Btwn. Bremen and Hamburg. 35 Km from Hamburg. Exit 46 as far as I remember. Reception open 6 to 23 with a break 13 to 15. But then some other people are at the gate to give u a envelope with key and boom cart. Or there is a telephone number to call.

Small shop. Restaurant and swimming pool. Only internet at reception area. U need to sign up with T-mobile and buy access. 4.5 E for 24 hours

Water and drain on several of the pitches used for short stayers. Pretty full, but still room for more. Price 25 E

03 July. To Konigssee ASCI Km 140

A28 exit 6 Westerstede. 30 Km West of Oldenburg. The GPS was sending me along some pretty bad road. I should have followed the driving direction in ASCI book, and followed L815.

Good little camping. Use free telephone to call owner. He will give u a code to open a safety box. Take a plastic envelope. There is key and shower coins inside. Pay next morning. No shop at camping. Internet is very good. But u need to pay on line to get access. 1 E 1 Hr. However min payment is 6 E. Pay with credit card or PayPal. U can also get a ticket in reception. A lot cheaper. 2 E 24 hours. There is a small lake for swimming. With a sand beach. Sanitary very god. Heated block. Open all year. www.campingplatz-am-koenigssee.de +49(0)44531706 Only 3 visitors units inclusive me. Rest are permanent. Big parking outside. Very quiet area. Price 17 E

05 Juli To Weisser Brunnen CC 150 Km

I went through Hamburg on the A1. Then heading for Kiel. The camping is in 23829 Wittenborn. There is a small restaurant on site. Reception open 9 - 13 and 15 - 18. I guess there are ways for later arrival. The small town is very quiet. Then u drive through a small forest to get to camping. Sort of narrow roads.

Internet in restaurant. Free.

There is a big grass field where u can stay without decoupling. Only 3 visitors. Price 16 E. Only 1 person. www.camping-weisserbrunnen.de +49045541413

Camping is 20 km from main motorway Hamburg to Jutland. That is prop why not so many guests.

07 Juli To To Dancamps Holmsland Klit Hvide Sande CC 100 Km

I got there from the South. There is a lot of driving on narrow local roads. Through small villages and so. The camping is only quarter full. It is right behind the sand dunes with direct access to the beach. Hvide Sande is good for surfing, kite surfing, windsurfing and a nice small fishing port. Camping is still good for CC discount a few days more. Other camping sites in the area were pretty full. Camping is easy to find. Though the access road is narrow, but there is no traffic once u are off the main road running along the coast.

14 July To Nystrup Camping in Klitmoeller 140 Km

Klitmoeller i a famous surf place in Denmark. The camping was almost full, so better book in advance. It is best to follow the road towards Vorupoer for 1 km, and then turn off towards the camping. The main street of Klitmoeller is a bit crowded in the high season. The parking at the surf beach has a 2 hr limit.

Internet expensive on the camping. However you can buy a sim card easily in Denmark and then load 3 G data for 15 Euro. I use the PC suite from Nokia. Works like a dream. The type of card you want is called "Tank selv" that is pay as u go.

There is a parking outside the camping. It is a quiet street with only little traffic.

18 July. To Aalborg Familie camping 80 Km

Splendid camping, as for the modern facilities. Busy. Book in advance. Easy parking on street outside camping while check in. Driving up to the boom, you block the entrance, if you tow a caravan, more than 4 meters.

Internet 30 Kr a day. 50 for 2 days. Shopping 1 Km. 20 E day 1 person caravan+car+el.

22 July. To Torup Camping by Hirtshals 100 Km

Nice place. Easy to find. Easy to get in and out. Big pitches. Internet 50 DKK i day. 27.00 E 1 night 1 person + el

24 July 2014. Ferry Hirtshals Larvik.

I bought the ticket on line. Along the road leading to the terminal, there is a check-in cabin, you show the ticket, and they give you boarding pass and instructions where to park. Everything very efficient. Crossing time 4 hours.

Once in Larvik I headed for Granholmen Camping. 10 Km away. I had called this morning to ask for a space, but I could barely squeeze in. Camping easy to find. A parking outside, but busy with beach visitors and their cars, as it is a sunny and hot day. Price for car caravan 1 person and el. 300 Nkr. Internet 50 Nkr. I think you could be 4 persons for the same price.

Small beach. Mini restaurant. No shop. Hot shower 10Nkr 37.00 E

If the camping is full there is a public parking in Sandefjord, by the bay, where I saw a caravan and a RV. It looked as if they had stayed the night there.

25 July 2014 To Moen Camping Hemsedal on route to Hoddavika. 305 Km

Up to 30 Deg. most of the day. Driving along first on the motorway to Oslo, then on E 16, rigsvej 7 to Gol, rigsveg 52 to Hemsedal. Camping is right of the main road before Hemsedal. 250 Nkr incl. El. 30.90 E. Internet free. And it work well. Lot of space, so not needed to disconnect the car. Looks more like a winter camp with wooden awnings.

In Gol 20 KM from here there are some very large camping. All the way from Oslo. Manny camping sites. Signposted as well. And close to main road.

60.84466N 8.61903E

26 July 2014 To Gaasemyr Camping Byrkjelo 6826 Km 196

I continued along rigsveg 52. Where it joined E 16 i turned left, (E16 right leads to Oslo) until rigsveg 5, where I turned right. Crossed with a ferry over Sognefjorden. At the junction with E39 I turned right to Byrkjelo. The camping was not the main camping in town. Very small and pretty however. Just make sure you can make it back up to the main road.

Next time I will try Byrkjelo Camping and hytter *** - Byrkjelo (01/05-20/09) >+4757867430 61.73059N 6.50852E

Price 175 NKR incl. el. No internet

27 July To final destination. Hoddavika. Km 123

100 NKR a day. 50 for el. Shower 30. No internet unless u make a deal with a private house or surf house

"Unquote logbook"

It was a long drive to Hoddavika. It took almost 2 month. I arrived in sunshine and 30 degree. Very rare at the Norwegian Westcoast. After some days some swell started to arrive. I was in the water at once. Too eager, and sprained my back. Then I realized that it is not very smart to drive 4000 Km and get back problems, because there are 4000 Km back also.

I had about 25 surf days during this 4 month trip.

The real special thing of this trip was actually happening in Holland. During the previous winter I was surfing Amazon for something to read. For fun I entered some names of friends that I had not seen for 40 years. One had written about his travels in the desert "The empty quarter" in the Middle East.

I managed to get contact with him and one more Dutch friend and we met as I was passing through Holland.

When we were young, around 18 to 20 we would spend summer vacation together. It was all about driving in some old cars we had managed to get together. Down through Europe, Spain. Then exploring the Desert and the mountains in Morocco, before we continued to Algiers. 3 summers we were on the road. Each year getting further and further. Very exciting in that age.

We were big fans of Jack Kerouac and his book "On the Road"

Our life had taken different tracks. Some have had very promising carriers. Other ending as a surf bum. Me. The strange thing is, as we met again and started talking, the in-between years evaporated, as if we had seen each other yesterday.

This summer, 2017, the desert explorer called me that he was passing by. He came driving from Amsterdam. Stayed 3 days and drove home again. That is an almost 4 thousand kilometre round trip.

Saint Girons Plage is one of the many very good surf beaches you find in France between the Spanish border and La Gironde River further north. While I was there on the camping I started surfing with a young family that was on an extended vacation with their almost new born twins and one older child. They had been traveling the Spanish north coast with car and caravan and were now slowly returning towards their home.

I like to meet people that are enthusiastic about what they are doing, and I was well impressed seeing how they took turns looking after the kids at the beach and surfing.

I was by now retired. In the previously years I have had some short jobs as an engineer, but not anymore. I was free to go to and do some more exploring and surfing. I spend a month on the beaches around Conil de la Frontera in Andalucia near Cadiz. Fuente de Gallo soon became my favourite beach there. The swell is mellower in this area, compared to Sagres in Portugal. It is the same North West swell, but the 500 Km extra distance, reduces the energy of the swell hitting the coast. Good for beginners and old men like me. Besides there are some good quality camping sites, and prices in this area is quite reasonable. It is an autumn, winter and spring destination. I don't think you will find a lot of surf during the summer, besides it will be very hot, I think.

26 of November I was back on the camping in Sagres. There the caravan was placed until next spring. I was part there, but also on Mallorca. Increasing the surf day count.

By end of the year 2014, it was 864 days. During the year 97 days.

Chapter 9 The year 2015

The year 2015 was a close repetition of the year 2014. A lot of surfing, and travelling with the caravan to Denmark and back.

I was leaving Sagres Portugal the 3 rd. of March. Then spending some time in Conil de la Frontera. After two weeks there, the wind started strong from the east, and rain. A lot of rain. 7 days of a lot of rain. The camping became 20 centimetres of mud. The only positive thing was that no rain came through the roof, so I was comfortable enough.

I continued onward to Denia, where I took the ferry to Mallorca for some vacation.

End of May I continued to France, surfing with my friends from last year. After that I went to Denmark. Along the way visiting friends and family.

On the return trip I was joining surf classes in Oyambre with www.surfn soul.com. End of September, I was back in Sagres.

Surfing continued and by the end of the year, the day count was 959 days. 95 days during the year.

You may start to wonder how somebody want to spend this amount of time in the water with a surfboard. I was not actually progressing, with surfing skills, or the progress was very slowly.

The only reason I could give was that it was making me feel good, physically and mentally. I thought it was down to the increased amount of exercise, which is correct. There are however other things as well. It took 2 years more before I came across the possible answer.

Chapter 10 The year 2016

During the spring of 2016, I started to feel that some changes in my life style was needed. I was lucky to find an apartment in front of one of the best winter surf beaches in Sagres. My time living in a small caravan was over. At least for now.

During the last 2 years I had been traveling more than 10.000 km around Europe. I was mainly using 4 lane motor way, because I had the caravan in tow. That was enough motor way for now. I wanted to get onto the smaller local roads, and see what it looked like.

By end of August I was ready to go. I had bought a 4 person tent. The poles was integrated in the tent. A 5 minutes job to camp. I also bought a new 10 foot surfboard. With the dimensions that the German I met in Cold Hawaii on my first year of surfing had suggested. Which was called a Bufo Enterprise.

I was now an owner of copy a Bufo Enterprise. The association with Star Trek and Captain Kirk, pleased me. What could go wrong?

One morning at 10.00 O'clock I started north. I had made no travel plan. It was 33 deg.

I had a plan how to travel inland on the Iberian Peninsula. During the summer heat. That was, driving during the day in the air conditioned car. Relaxing in air conditioned cafeterias along the road. Camp when the sun is setting. Preferably in a high area without too much vegetation and far from any lakes and water reservoirs. In such an area you get the desert effect, cool nights.

The first camping was a municipal site in central Portugal. These sites are basic sites, but you get good value for the 10 Euro a night, you pay. As I arrived around 19.00 hours it was still 30 degree, but the temperature dropped and the night was comfortable. I was under some trees in deep shadow. No morning sun to heat my tent.

The second day I was crossing the Duero valley. The thermometer was one time showing 43 degree. Because of the river, humidity was high as well. People were sheltering in the gas station air condition.

Later I was in the hills in the border area between Spain and Portugal. Again a municipal camping. Hot as I arrived, but a pleasant night. Unfortunately the tent was in the sun the next morning, so I had to pack it away rapidly and leave. I had learned another lesson. Pack the car and tent first thing in the morning, then move to a nice place in the shadow. Prepare the breakfast here and relax for a few hours more. To make the driving time for the day shorter.

The third day, during the afternoon, I arrived at the Spanish north coast, at the Bay of Biscay. The temperature dropped 10 degree, a nice camping with a small restaurant. Beach right in front. Nice swell rolling in. Only a few surfers in sight. Time to get the surf board in the water.

During my stay, there was several days with light rain, but as the weather was mild that was not a problem. The tent was water tight and I was comfortable. I had an insulation carpet on the floor inside and a thermarest NeoAir thin air madras to sleep on. During the evening I could just lie on the floor, or on the air madras and look TV via the internet. The meals I took in the restaurant.

Galicien is an interesting place to visit. The weather is rainy and windy a big part of the year. One of the big pleasures for people is good food.

One Saturday morning I entered e restaurant in a small town for a cup of coffee. After I was served I was told I could eat as much I liked of the big cakes that were on display at the bar counter. It was like being in paradise. If it was like that every day, I never found out. Too much to hope?

I asked how long time the high season lasted in the area near Foz, where the camping was located, and was told 2 week. The beginning of August.

Next Place I was visiting was Vega beach and camping. 57 km East from Gijon. An extremely nice place. Pay to park by the beach all day for 2.4 E. Camping was 20 E. Very quiet with only a few surfers. Camping deep in a valley. Well protected from the sun. About 2 km between camping and beach.

I went on east along the coast I was looking at some other beaches as well, but either could not find them, or could not park as I got there.

I was also trying to go and have a look at the lakes in Pico de Europa National park. About a million other tourists had the same idea, and only a limited number of cars may enter at the same time. This show the influence of the guide books. Everybody are heading to the same place.

The 30 of August I arrived at San Vicente in the Oyambre Natural Park and pitched the tent at my usual camping. There were noticeable more tourists here compared to the area around Foz

I was taking some classes with www.surfn soul.com. I was very pleased with the result. There are so many small details to learn and use at the right time. In the beginning, 2008 as far as I remember, I did not pay too much attention, because I did not believe it was that important. But now I can feel the difference when you do it right. I am all ears now.

Then it was time to return to Sagres. A place I had wanted to visit for a long time, is the west coast of Galicien. So I headed for Pantin Beach. It was a nice drive getting there. I followed the coast all the time. As I was just driving a normal small car, I did not have to worry of the quality of the road. The more narrow and local type, the better.

I soon realised, as I arrived at Pantin, that this is where the big swell lives. Far too complicated for me. Also I was bringing my 10 feet Enterprise board that had turned out to be a bit too much to handle in bigger swell.

Also I experienced a great deal of condensation in the morning. Outside and inside the tent as well. It was time to head home. After a 3 days drive I was back in Sagres.

I did not stay long in Sagres 18 September I was on the road again, to go across Andalucía, then take the ferry to Mallorca. The decision was to zig zag as much as possible. Use secondary roads, and see what was happening at the end of the road.

North from Seville I found Parque Natural Sierra Norte. In this area wolf has been reintroduced. A narrow tarmac road of 50 km was crossing the area. I thought it would be fun to drag a piece of ham after the car and try to get a photo of wolves chasing the car, but I never saw a live wolf. Only a statue.

The road was becoming more and more narrow, and it was a bit worrying. No coverage on the mobile either. No traffic, only a few distant farms. The branches from the trees scraped against the roof of the car from time to time. I was about to turn back as I heard a distant roar. Then 10 Harley Davidson passed by from the other direction. That made me continue.

Towards the evening I was looking for a camping, and saw a sign that I decided to follow, as no other site was close by. The road led into hilly area to a big lake. On the shores was the camping. It was mostly for permanent camping. Most covered with sun shades. The lake was adding to the humidity and it felt very hot. Everybody had some sort of radio or TV playing. I was having a headache. Not a nice evening. However at 10 o'clock everything went quiet. I managed to get 2 litres of cold water, and the night coolness started to arrive.

Driving through the province of Jaen next day is quite an experience. As far as you can see, olive trees in line. Almost 20 % of the world production is from this area.

Later I entered Parque Nacional de Gazorla, Segura y Villas. One of the biggest if not the biggest in Spain. An impressive area. Reminds me of the story of Shangri-La. A deep valley between mountains. During the night in my tent I could hear animal sounds very often. Owls mainly, and before dawn the red deer started. I thought that this is how the world sounded, before humans took over.

The rest of the trip was uneventful. Once on Mallorca I had practical things to attend to. Only 5 surf days. The return trip started in the beginning of November.

I wanted to visit the area of Alpujarras. The area in the foot hills of Sierra Nevada. The small white villages lying one after the other. We spend our second night in a hotel there. It was Marianne's first week in retirement, which we celebrated with a nice dinner. In the morning we saw the first snow high on the mountain tops. During the day we visited several of the villages as we moved along. It is not that big an area, and the next evening we were already north of Malaga in a town call Colmenar. Then next stop was Sagres.

The rest of the year was surfing. I tried my luck with a 7 feet Fatum Duke Surf board. You could call it a cut off long board. Part of the middle is cut out. The nose is rounded, and it is catching the waves easily. The weight is only 4 kilo. It is a nice board when line up is crowded and the face of the wave is steep. I had to work on my pop up as there is no time to use your knees. What I could not get used to was the difficulty with paddling. During the winter there are more rib currents and stronger currents in general.

End of year 1086 surf days. During year 121

Chapter 11 The year 2017. Present year.

New Year eve my friends I met in Saint Giron came for a week surfing. The weather conditions were difficult, but we did manage to find surfable waves every day. Also a fair bit of sunshine.

January can be a bit boring in Sagres. With a fair bit of rain. There have been big storms as well during this month. Only a few of the restaurants and cafés stay open. February is usually the month that you get the coldest nights. During the day, however when the sun is out and you are out of the wind, you start to feel the heat from the sun, and from time to time someone will take a swim from the beach.

There is a lot of surf during the winter. Sometimes you get the nice clean 1 to 2 metre big swell from distant storms, those are great days. I felt I was improving a lot during this winter.

Now that I was living in an apartment I did not need the caravan anymore. I decided to bring it to Spain and place it in storage.

The car and caravan had been out of use for almost a year. Once a month I had started the car to let it idle for 10 minutes and also drove it a bit around the camping in Sagres. The inside of the car was attacked by mildew as the door seals had been leaking. The caravan was in a better state. I had lifted one wheel at a time and turned it by over hand, and moved the hand brake.

I took off 25 of February and soon entered the usual routine. The plan was to pick up Marianne in Malaga airport and she would then join me along the Mediterranean coast. In Capopino camping between Fuengirola and Marbella, I got a nice pitch. The camping was almost full. A nice camping with shop and restaurant on the camping, and more restaurants just outside. 10 minutes' walk to the beach, where there were more restaurants, one having happy hour, which we used frequent.

We did some sightseeing up and down the coast, and with the car we drove inland to visit the small villages and of course Ronda. In one village we sat down for a bit to eat and drink. 1 beer, soft drink for the driver a couple of tappas each, 1 big cake and 2 coffee. The bill came to 6 Euro total. The difference in the prices at the coast and just 30 km inland was amazing.

During the winter I had started Geocaching. That gives you something to do when you are out for a walk, and it often leads you to a spots where there are something of interest. I just used my mobile phone for GPS, so it was a cheap sport to start up.

We continued along the coast, and the next stop was a camping site named Don Cactus. This is near Motril, in the area of greenhouses. Everywhere you look there are greenhouses. The ground where there are no greenhouses is barren and rocky.

The camping is very good actually. In the middle there is a big artificial rock. On top you see Don Cactus with his guitar. He has a big Mexican hat on his head supported with a lot of wires. We are in an area of strong winds that last for days and days.

For 5 days we were unable to continue as 100 km an hour wind were reported on the motorway towards Almeria.

We were making day tours along the coast and inland. One day we went to the capital of the Alpujarra region. The area where we went last fall and liked a lot.

It was time for lunch and we sat down at a small restaurant. A little later an elderly man walked up to us and asked if he could sit down, which he did. He introduced himself, and then started to tell about his life. He had worked in Germany many years, now he was back in his home town. We heard about his wife that left him long ago, and the rest of his family. Then he go up, told us goodbye and then he told where he lived and said: "Now you know where I live, if you need any help, come and knock on my door, because now you have a friend here."

A few days later, the wind eased up, and we could continue. Our next stop was a small private camping some kilometres north from Caboneras. During the evening we went to the small bar restaurant. Here we found a group of people, they invited us to sit with them and have a beer and some homemade pizza, made by the son to the owner, fresh out of the oven.

They told us they met on this camping every winter to spend some time together. They were from several different European countries. One was an English woman, she had been coming along the last 12 years.

Next day we continued along the coast. Past Aquilas to Puerto de Mazarron. I wanted to see the big guns that are protecting the entrance to Cartagena harbour, that is Spains main naval base. They have no military importance today, but I had been told they were massive and real impressive.

Unfortunately the road leading there was very narrow, and I gave up going there. Instead we had some coffee and cake at a bar along the coast. It was Sunday, people swimming in the sea.

Next day we moved on to Guardemar de Segura. Camping Marjal. I bought a folding bike and explored the area. Marianne returned home by plane.

Marjal is a camping where the very big motorhomes hang out. My neighbour had one that looked like a 2 story apartment building. I could have parked my car inside his luggage compartment.

Eventuallt to Denia where caravan was stored at a caravan parking until next winter.

After a short stay on Mallorca I flew back to Sagres. Time for surfing.

Friday 19 May I was on my way again towards Saint Girone in France, but first I was heading for a birthday party near Alicante. Car packed to the brim. Bike and surfboard on the roof.

"Quote logbook"

Departure Friday 19-5-2017

Arrived at Camping EL Rocio same afternoon. I had a nice evening meal at the restaurant, and after a look at El Rocio village went to bed. I had purchased a Thermarest ultra-light folding bed and had the thermarest Neoair on top. Also a 4 season sleeping bag. So I should be nice and cosy - right.

Not at all. Freezing cold. The sleeping bag was to narrow and could not close all the way. The ultra-light bed collapsed. I could not find my warm sleeping hat. On top of this it was damp and noise from passing cars. So I developed a bad migraine. One that would not go away even after eating strong medication.

Next morning I got the gear packed into the car and took off towards Granada

Saturday 20/5/2017

I had planned to pass Seville on a Sunday. At least there are no trucks. Still plenty traffic. Later I passed the town Osuna along the motor way. A place where I have stayed at a nice hotel before.

Just before Antequera I went to look at a camping called La Sirencilla in town Humiliado. I is quite new but it was still early and I drove on. Passed Granada and 10 km after Granada turned right to camping Alto de Vinuela, Beas de Granada, where I stayed the night.

The view from the small restaurant terrace was magnificent. The mountains of Sierra Nevada with snow. The restaurant great. A camping where I would like to return, and an area to explore more.

Sunday 21/05/2017

I was a day early, so took it easy along the stretch Granada Torrevieja. First I drove through the small village near the camping. I managed to just squeeze through the narrow streets. Then I followed some small local roads in the back country at the foot of Sierra Nevada. I came to a reservoir and a big dam. There was a cafe that served me coffee con leche and a brownie with ice.

At one place I saw a sign saying Parque Natural Sierra de Baza. So I had a look. Not too interesting. I also realized there is a difference between this and Parque National.

Next I had a look at camping El Pinar del Rey. Velez Blanco. I did not like it, so drove on to camping Fuente Baños de Fortuna. Known for it hot springs. And true enough. There is a large swimming pool with this water.

The camping was well kept. I had my own little shower block. There is no shadow though, but I was there late and moved on the next morning, so not a problem. The whole area is very dry, desert like.

Monday 21 / 05 / 2017

I drove on and arrived in Torrevieja. La Rojales. There I was staying in a nice hotel for 3 days. For a Birthday celebration.

Thursday 25 / 05 / 2017

I left Torrevieja and drove on towards the North coast of Spain. First stop was Kiko Rural Park in Villagordo de Gabriel. Nice camping and an area that was worth studying some more, but I was eager to move on.

Getting there I first followed the motor way in the direction of Madrid. Then the N 330 between Almansa and Requena. Some parts with beautiful scenery. Well worth to have a look at Reserva National de Muela de Cortes. Also some hill top towns with castles on top.

Friday 26/05/2017

Leaving Kiko 10.30. Should have taken a look at the dam, but started towards Albarracin, some 200 km away. Following the good quality 2 lane local roads. Very little traffic and nice country site.

Higher up, until 1200 m, it was mountain with some pine trees and rocky landscape. Great idea to use local roads instead of Motorway.

Arriving at destination, I realized there was a more scenic route the last 20 km. Over Bezas.

Albarracin , also called the most beautiful town in Spain, is an old Berber fort and settlement. I wanted to take my bike into the town, but streets are very narrow and steep, and as cars are prohibited, bikes may as well be banned Unless u walk it, I guess.

The camping was quite good actually, but pitch your tent between the RV ´s. The tent only area turned out to be very noisy. So I ended up with a nice migraine again.

Saturday 27/05/2017

Departure Albarracin. Drove to Bronchales. The highest camping in Spain. 1500 m. Then Tordysillos and Setiles. Reaching the N211.

At Molina I stopped to look at the old Moorish Castle. El Cid lived there for a while. I may have stepped in his foot prints.

Past Soria onwards to Reserva nacional de Urbion. Next to embalses de la Cuerda del Pozo. This is a good place and you can get a good swim in the lake. There is a bit of a restaurant as well. The camping is very big. Except from nature little else.

The next day I read in the papers that Soria was hit by hail the size of golf balls. Good I moved on.

Sunday 20-05-2015

Weather forecast was not too good and I booked a hotel near Embalses de Ebro.

Monday 29/05/2017

Had a look at Embalsed de Ebro. They are enormous. Then I went across the motorway and took a hardly 2 lane road down to the coast. Took a photo of the, source of Ebro. Driving down was mainly inside a cloud, so not so much to see.

Eventually ended up in San Vicente where I had booked 2 nights at Alohamiento De Paramo. Just next to the Gas station, at N road leading to Oviedo. Big Villa with annexes. Parking in the garden, and across the street a restaurant with private parking as well. Tel 0034 6762 16559 . Booking in start at 15.30, a bit late. Room ok. No Air Con.

Wednesday 31/05/2017

I move onto camping at San Vicente beach. Weather still unstable. After 2 days I get a cabin for a night as it is forecast with rain. Temperature only about 17 Deg. during daytime. Nights are cool, but I am comfortable just using my sleeping bag as a blanket. And lying at my Neoair.

It is more the rain I am worried about. I should have pitched near some trees so I could put up an awning over the entrance to the tent. I have done that before and it worked perfect.

There is a good restaurant at the camping and I get most of my meals there.

Saturday 03/06/2017

Pitching tent again. Prepare a tarp over the entrance. There are 2 small leaks at opposite end of tent. I book a hotel for the night. Hospederia las Calzados, just outside San Vincente. Good private parking. Also a bit of parking outside. Country side. 30 Euro, breakfast 4 Euro. Room a bit chilly. Outside only 13 deg. C. I used my sleeping bag and was very comfortable.

Sunday 04/06/2017

Still quite a bit of rain. Tent is ok now. Quite comfortable, with the electric heater working, inside is dry and warm. Got sms that that friends have arrived St. Giron. Tomorrow I will go there as well.

Monday 5 th to Thursday 15 June St Giron Plage

During the stay we had a heavy thunder rain storm. I found that water was entering in the tent from floor. Next day I got some impregnating spray, and that cured the problem. For some time only I am afraid. Because the fabric is stretched a lot when the tent is packed.

Else the trip driving there was the usual heavy traffic and several incompetent drivers along especial the Bilbao area of the motorway.

During the stay I forgot to switch off the GPS and the evening before departure the battery was flat. Luckily Phillip had a battery charger. That solved the problem.

Note: The surfing was good. It is nice to surf with other people, especial on big days. We had some 2 meter days. Surfing the waves is not the problem, but all the paddling tyres me out. It is also a problem to get back to the beach, as some waves are breaking hard just in front of the beach. The trick I use is as follow. I approach the coast lying on the board or swimming with board. The last 10-20 meter, the waves can become very steep. I see it coming and press the rear of the board down in the water. Only the rear. The rear is towards the open sea. The approaching wave will press on the board more, and move you on closer to the beach. When you get the ground under your feet, hang on so the surge is not dragging you back out. When the surge is less, then it is time to run for it.

Do not let the wave get under the board. It can lift you and the board and throw you onto the beach. In the best case you will be digging sand from all orifices in your body. But you can get hurt.

Thursday 15/06/2017

The departure was during the afternoon, so I had selected a camping in the Basque Pyrenees 120 km away. First motorway to Bayonne, then D918 towards Pamplona. The camping is along the road called Narbaitz Vacances Pyrenees Basque. Lots of green grass and very well maintained.

Friday 16/06/2017

I thought it was time now for some local roads. The Basque Country is very hilly, and there is a lot to look at. As it turned out that I was near St. Jean Pied de Port, I drove to St. Etienne along the D15.

I was glad that it was only a small car, as the road getting through town were pretty narrow. And worse was to come. The road NA 2600 to Erratzu was 1.5 lane into the hills. Interesting landscape here. I saw some pretty big birds, and then into the clouds. Busy to look out for cyclist and goats.

I had crossed the border into Spain and soon reached the N 121 A towards Pamplona. 40 Km before I reach Pamplona I made a right into some local roads. Soon after there was a sign with Navarra. I passed through some smart small towns with old houses. Very well maintained and flowers everywhere.

I was now reaching the Autovia to Burgos, and decided to floor it for the day and get west. In the afternoon I was in Castrojeriz, a small town on the Camino de Santiago route. 40 Km after Burgos and turn left down BU 404. A note: Take same way back to Autovia. Some of the villages on the other roads has narrow bridges. No problem with normal car, but with caravan??

Castrojeriz is very interesting and camping quite good. Getting to camping takes a little planning with a wide unit. I went through the town (thanks GPS) not a good idea.

Saturday 17/06/2017

A heat wave is now disturbing my plans, and I decide to take a more direct route to Sagres. As I had used the Silver route (Oviedo Seville) several times before I decided to drive via Portugal.

First direction Leon , then onwards A52 to exit 79 Puebla de Sanabria. Through the Montesino Natural park. This area was destroyed by forest fire some 25 years ago. I made a stop in one of the almost empty villages along the road. Had a coffee and a chat with the shop owner. He then said, that he never could go anywhere, his wife would not let him. They was apparently barely making a living from their small shop, and the village falling apart around them.

The municipal camping just north of Braganca is great. A river is running through. I was sitting there for a while too cool off.

Sunday 18/06/2017

As I was leaving, my neighbour at the camping showed me that around 40 forest fires was raging in central Portugal. I was first giving it little attention. You see them from far away, and the motorways are normally not affected. However one had trapped many people and the death toll was over 50.

The forest fires raged all summer. In middle of Octobre, when everybody thought that the season of was over, a rare hurricane developed south of Cap Verde islands and started to move slowly north. A strong hot air stream was created and the fires started again, worse than ever.

I then changed my route towards Nazare at the coast. I drove Villa Real..Viseu..Coimbra ..Leiria.

Next time I will go to Aveiro as the road Viseu Coimbra is 2 lane only, and with quite a bit of traffic.

Northern Portugal and the Duero valley has many good sights to offer driving along.

Stayed overnight at Orbitur Camping Nazare

Monday 19/06/2017

I left Nazare camping early to have a look at the North Shore beach where some big waves are seen during the winter. Today swell was only about 1 meter, so does not even break. Still heat wave however, so I continued towards Sagres.

First towards Lisbon. That was the route the GPS selected. As traffic was building up, I changed course towards Santarem, inland. Using the A 15. After Santarem the A 13 joining the A2 towards Algarve.

Very little traffic, apart getting through Santarem where the GPS tried to get me into town. But there are big signs to follow over this short stretch.

Driving through the Atlentejo region is impressive. The yellow colour from the dry grass and thousands of cork oak. It is like, drive 200 km, and then turn right to Sagres.

I encountered max day temperatures from 15 to 40 deg. C during this trip. Heavy rain, lots of sun shine and narrowly escaped big hail storm in Soria Spain. Golf ball size hail.

It is nice to be back in comfort, but the brain is already working on solutions how to improve things.

The biggest mistakes I did was not waterproofing the tent before I left and not bringing a car battery charger.

I did not use the bike cycle a lot, but as I can drive 100 km Hr with bike on top, it is no big trouble to bring it along. It may even come in handy with a car break down. Also I learned to sleep with a scarf around my neck, and something on the head during cold damp nights. My sleeping bag with a comfort zone to minus 20 it will get me through any cold night. But it is too narrow. So I only use it as a duvet.

The Thermarest ultra-light folding bed broke first night. The thermarest Neoair is great. It is only 5 cm thick. So if the ground is a bit uneven and you roll off, no big deal. You may not even notice. The pump with 2 AA batt, pumps it up quickly.

I am careful to do some stretching before I get up in the morning, and several times during the day. You want to stay with muscles a bit flexible when on a tent trip.

I start to pack the tent and all other things before breakfast. Then I find a space in the shadow or sun, depending of the temperature and cook my porridge. Maybe a bike trip afterwards. Especially if it is very hot I delay departure to enjoy the morning cool. Then the afternoon driving, trying to delay arrival at next camping till after 5 in the afternoon.

A bicycle shirt make wet is good for cooling. They are made in a way to soak moisture and wick it away from the body. You will be surprised how effective it is.

It was now end of June, during the next 2 month I was surfing. During that period I heard from people I know, about one near miss and one more serious accident caused by a bad fall surfing. Also the pop up was starting to give me some backache. I started to look for an alternative pop up. Safer and more gentle on your lower back. Eventually I developed what I called "The Easy-Popup" There are several video on the web www.silversurferdude.com that show how it works. It is for older people, but could be used for beginners also, if they only want to have some fun in the water now and again.

I have used it on very steep waves and also waves of about 2 meters, which is about as big as I can surf. I can only turn left along the wave. I am a regular foot surfer.

Another thing is, that it is good to use when it is crowded. And it is crowded in Sagres during the summer. As I stay low on the board as I make the drop, I can easily just grab the rails and slide into the water and stop the board, if there is an obstruction in front of me. Remember I surf with a longboard. You do not jump off the board and let the board fly when the wave is running out.

5 September the car was packed again for a camping trip to north Spain. I now had a new tent. A 3 person summer tent, where the poles had been replaced with air tubes. The fabric is reflecting the sun and the inner tent is completely black. Morning sunlight does not wake you up. First time I used it I found that it was quick and easy to set up and comfortable as well to stay in.

Just north of the border to Spain I was visiting Ponferrada. Here you have a restored Templar castle. I found a hotel in the area, actually a Pilgrim hotel for people doing the Santiago de Compostella route.

I got my bike and cycled to the castle, along the pilgrim track. People were shouting to me. I thought they were inviting me for a beer and some “tappa,” but they wanted to tell me that I was driving the wrong way. Also the rear wheel on the bike started to act funny, so I was happy to be back at the hotel, but did see the castle.

Next day I drove to Leon and then north to the coast. The weather was getting colder and rain forecast. I found another pilgrim shelter for the night. Interesting to see the backpackers. Some of them walk close to 1000 kilometres.

Next day I found a small pension. They gave me a very nice room for 40 Euro a night. There was a kitchen building in the garden and a bbq. place as well. I stayed there for the next 4 days. Then the surfing started.

We were mainly at the beach called Parajo beach. Better known as Yellow beach, where in 1929 a transatlantic plane on route to France made an emergency landing.

The waves were steep and hollow. There were many surfers, but most did catch very little wave. I was having better luck as I used my Safe Popup, so I was having a very low centre of gravity during the first part of the wave. It is a good position on a difficult day as you know that if you wipe out, you are a lot less likely to get hurt. This mean that you can paddle for the wave 100 %

All the lot younger surfers on their shorter boards, could not quite figure out how the old man caught all the waves, and having no wipe outs. Fun days.

Some days later Marianne arrived at Oviedo airport and we went touring into the mountains and along the coast. There is a National park that has the biggest forest of oak trees, and the last place in Spain where you can find wild bears. We found the oak trees, but not the bears. We did see them however, thanks to YouTube.

Eventually the weather improved. I had a new wheel on the bike and went on a short biking trip along an old mining railway. You had to bring a lamp to get through the tunnels.

Along the coast we visited the small fishing harbours and tried the local seafood. We saw the monument in memory of the Australian Peter Gulley who introduced surfing in this place with his brother Robert in 1968

Unfortunately the trip was too short. I drove Marianne to the airport and started the 1200 kilometre trip to get home to Sagres.

This time I followed the border area between Spain and Portugal. From Miranda del Duero, through Parque Natural Duero International. Here some of the oldest cave paintings, dating back 20.000 years have been found.

Further south you find the fortified town of Almeida. Dating back to the Bronze Age, and getting it present 12 pointed star fortification in 1641.

By the end of the day I camped at a very nice place Near Valhalla , along the N 232 in Serra da Estrella area.

The following night I spend in Evora, at the local camping. When I packed the car the following morning, my neighbour, who was with a motorhome, told me that he was surprised I wanted to spend so much time making camp with a tent. True, it is about one hour on arrival and again one hour on departure. I could only say that I just got 2 hours of exercise, and in my opinion that is important.

I parked outside the old town, car full of camping gear, stuff on the roof. Then I went to have breakfast in old town, where I found a nice area to sit.

Later the same day I visited the fortified town of Monzaras, in the wine district of Alentejo. In this area I spend a nice vacation with Marianne some years ago. Moving between small country hotels.

Later in the evening I was back in Sagres.

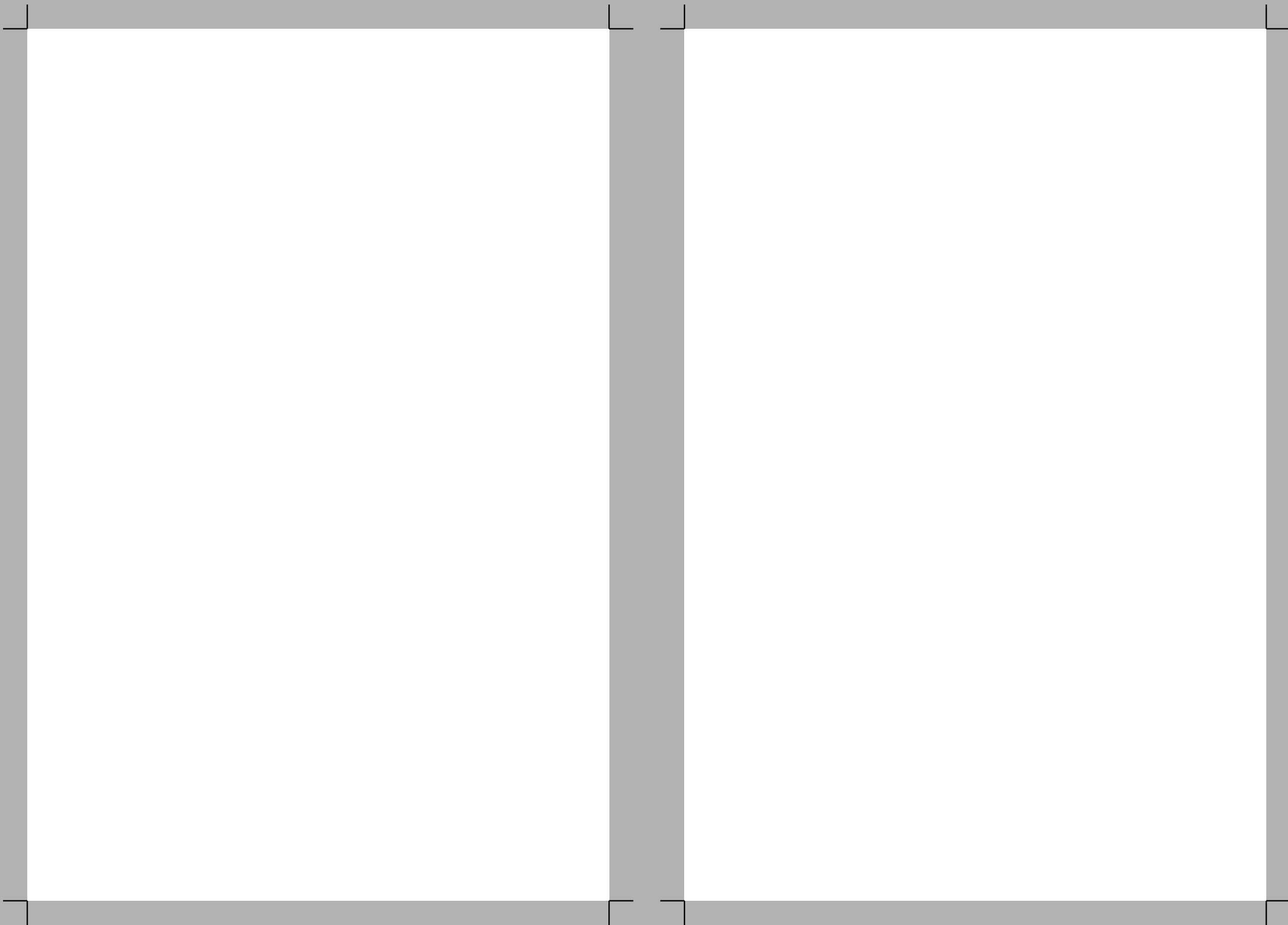
A few weeks later I started to write this book. At the same time I began reading the book “Surf Therapie” By Doctor Dr Guillaume. Here I realized that surfing could be a lot healthier than I knew. I always assumed that the exercise was the main reason why I felt good after a surf trip. Here I read about the good effect sea water will have on you as well.

It is important to be in the surf zone, but any exercise will do, you do not need to be using a surf board.

The book is in French. Available on Amazon. I used a Kindle reader on the my PC, and Google translator

I have been trying to improve in the art of surfing, because I found it a challenge. I will keep doing that. However I will now also be on the beach at other times to enjoy the “magic “of surfing.

Only remember. Get surf instruction before you start.



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