

Forgive what's essentially a mass mailing but a number of you have been asking.

Feel free to respond personally, and I'll surely answer in kind as time allows. Especially if you have suggestions about how best to keep in touch.

The below, drafted Sunday this week, has been lightly edited since for new developments.

* * * *

The boat has left the dock!

Yesterday [Saturday 5 Jan 2019] at around four in the afternoon De Liefde (MMSI 368055110, USCG 1289255) left the dock with a crew of three aboard, not including me. We had planned to leave for the Caribbean in December, but a combination of refit delays and bad weather made it prudent to postpone to January. Instead of a three-month trip down and back, the new plan is to meet the boat in the Caribbean next week and sail *up* from St Lucia to the Bahamas over a period of about two months. That will be experience enough, methinks, for the first time on the new-to-me boat, and indeed my first time ever doing anything like this.

Some questions (and answers) that many of you have had: Yes, there will be 'professional help' aboard, the delivery captain is an experienced British Navy sailor, our sailing instructor for the Caribbean segment is an ex-RAF navigator (and boats are slower than what he's used to), and a Mediterranean professional skipper will lead us through the Bahamas on the last leg. While the ultimate responsibility is mine, I'm quite happy to have this skilled advice and I expect to learn a lot from this trip.

You can follow along in two ways — I'm setting up a web page at 'sydeliefde.com' for blog posts and pictures [note, still under construction; and note, 's/y' is the international equivalent of the US 's/v']; and the boat broadcasts its position through AIS (Wikipedia: Automatic identification system), which is picked up by various web services and is available eg at 'marinetraffic.com' (search for the MMSI number) or various apps (I use 'marine. Also I have a satellite phone, and the boat does too, details at

<http://www.ericdancepiano.com/Boat/SyDeLiefde.html>

Eventually this page will get moved to 'sydeliefde.com'.

* * * * *

Update: AIS is available only when the boat is within VHF range of shore. So right now the boat is showing off the coast of Virginia, when in fact it's in the middle of the Atlantic. I'm in touch with the skipper by text — he carries his own satellite phone, with position updates — and he's putting into Bermuda after sustaining some damage in a bad storm. These things happen!

— Eric