

THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

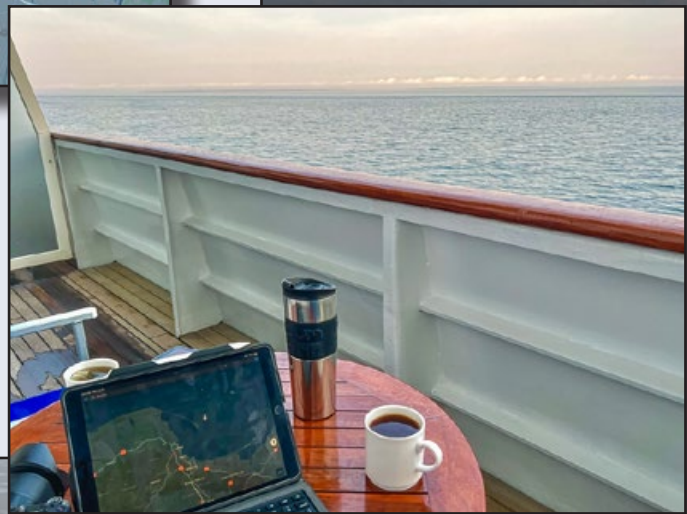
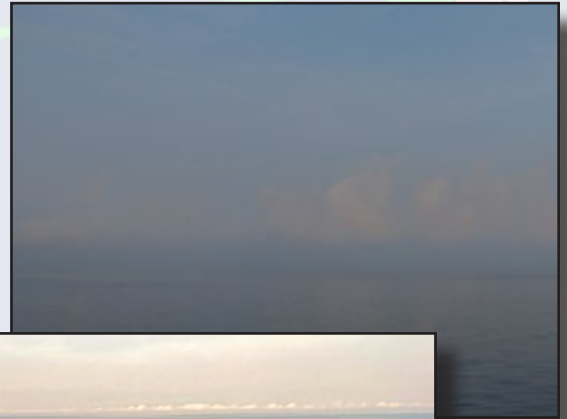
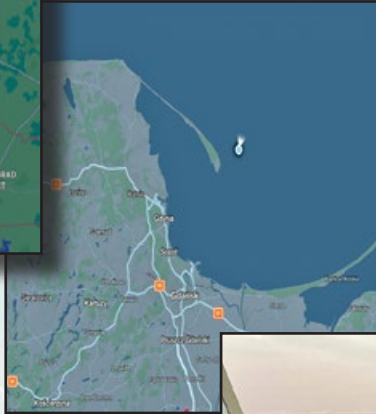


Our next stop after Bornholm was Gdańsk. The overnight passage from Bornholm was on calm seas. We awoke to the calm seas and a tranquil sunrise, both enjoyed from our private Situation Room. I brought my own French press and coffee from Seattle. I've been ruined with good coffee beans for some years now, (albeit I was initially ruined by cupping lessons in Tucson, not Seattle).

A few weeks after visiting Bornholm was when the apparent terrorist attacks on the Nord Stream 2 pipelines off the east coast of Bornholm. We had traversed the sea on all sides of Bornholm except the east side.

All those bubbles coming up are bad news for ships passing over them as they can lose buoyancy and sink. There is speculation that this is what happened to some of the ships that have been mysteriously lost in the Devil's Triangle, only due to natural and sudden releases of large gas deposits from the ocean floor.

As we got closer to Gdańsk a harbor pilot came out to meet us and was deposited on our ship (in motion of course) to insure our safe arrival in the port of Gdańsk.

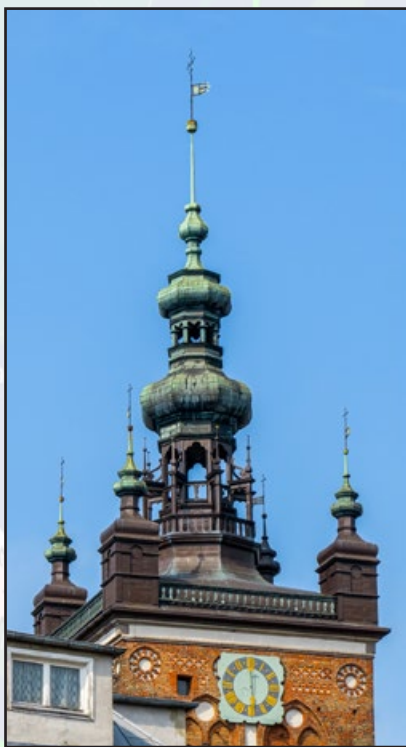


THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

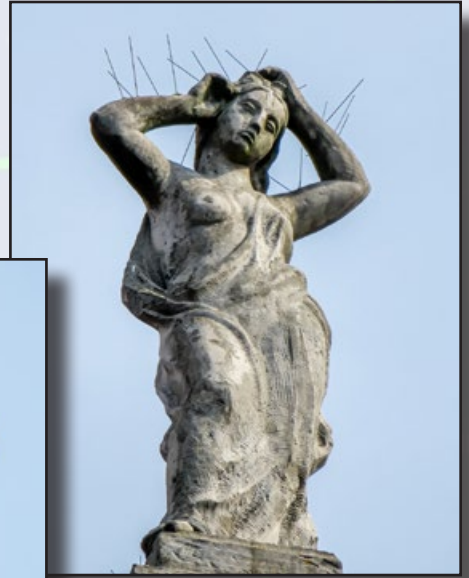
GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

Soon we were on the streets of Gdańsk, Poland and were told that if we got lost that this tall tower was visible from most of Gdańsk and is *the* place that everyone is to go to if lost... so we eagerly and happily put it to the test.

However, there were other towers to distract one from the true path.



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2 GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA



The fellow in the window gathered some attention, with the character to the right seemingly saying "really?"

THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

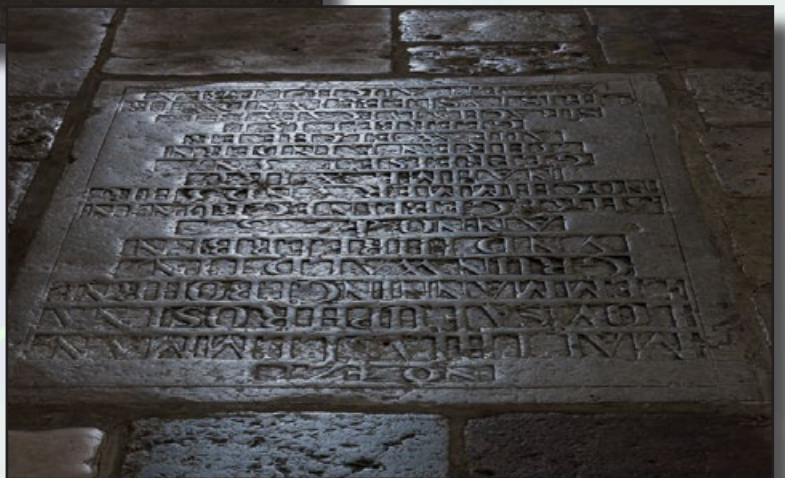
GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

It was pretty hot in Poland, as it was across much of Europe this summer, so we spent some time in the coolness of St. Mary's Church, escaping the heat. It was formally known as the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The St. Mary's Church is currently one of the two or three largest brick churches in the world.

As early as 1243 a wooden church existed at this site. The foundation stone for the new brick church was placed in 1343. From 1343 to 1360 parts of the pillars and a low level turret was built and has been preserved from this building.

The church was severely damaged late in World War II by the Red Army. The wooden roof burned completely and most of the ceiling fell in. Fourteen of the large vaults collapsed. The windows were destroyed. In places the heat was so intense that some of the bricks melted. All the bells crashed down when their bell cages collapsed in the fire. The floor of the church, containing priceless gravestone slabs, was torn apart, allegedly by Soviet soldiers attempting to loot the corpses buried underneath.

There was lots of interesting things to see and read about in the church, but what drew my interest the most was the old stone floors. While I couldn't understand what they said, it was easy to see that we were not the first walking across them.



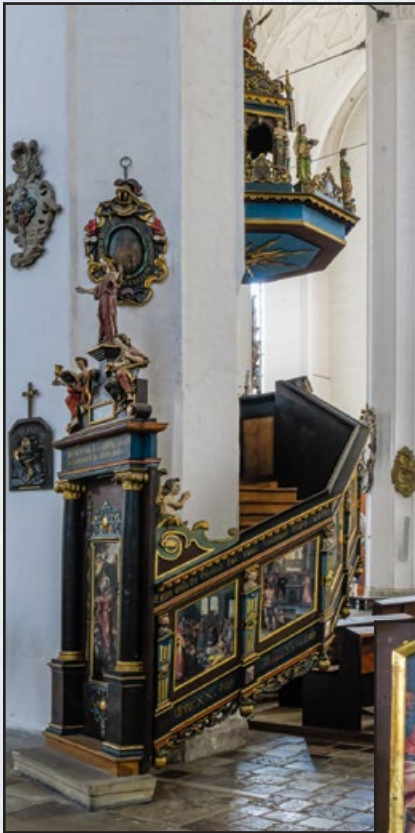
THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

The Gdańsk astronomical clock was a big draw in the church. Constructed between 1464–1470, its complex dials show the time and date, phases of the moon, the position of the Moon and Sun in relation to the zodiac signs, and the calendar of saints. Adam and Eve ring the bell on the hour, and at noon a procession appears that features Adam and Eve alongside the Three Kings, the Apostles, and Death.

Standing 46 ft (14 metres) high, upon completion the clock was the largest in the world and it may possibly still be the largest wooden astronomical clock. Due to severe damage in World War II, it was reconstructed after 1945.

I liked this pulpit and the paintings on it. It was originally in a different church (St. John), constructed in 1616-1617, and transferred here in the 1960s.



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2 GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

The church has some big pipes too!

A small door with serious character.



And a seriously big door with serious wear marks!



And a seriously big ceramic construction (alter).



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA



And a couple more of the pieces I found particularly interesting.



After our extended cooling off time in St. Mary's Church we exited back onto the hot streets of Gdańsk and towards our pickup point to go back to the ship. There was still some interesting things to see on our way.



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

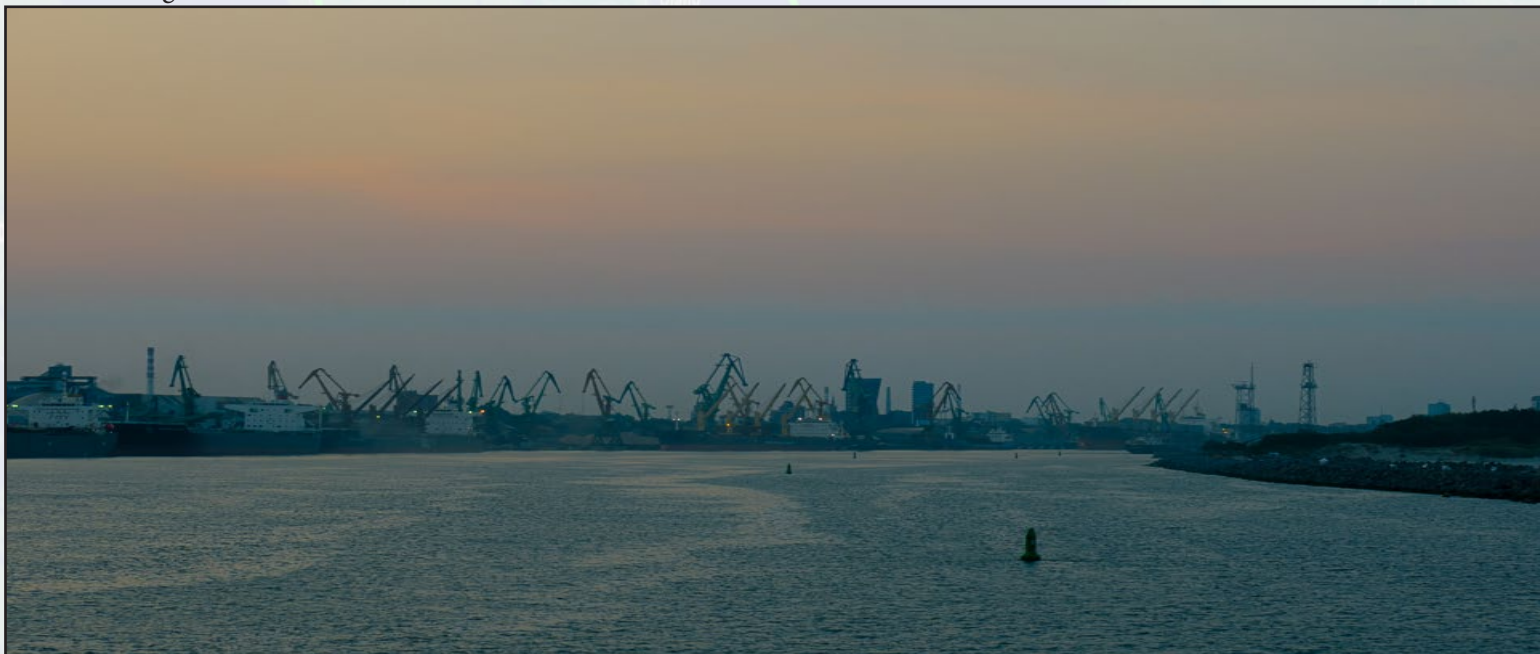
Once back on the ship we left for our next overnight voyage to Klaipėda, Lithuania. There were ships to see on our way out.



As we left, the backlit industrial area of Gdańsk it looked pretty bleak as compared to our short hours in the beautiful historic Gdańsk. In retrospect, a commonly bleak view upon exit and entry of many of the places we visited and probably more cities in the world than not.



The next morning at dawn we arrived in Klaipėda to the same sort of industrial landscape as Gdańsk, but bathed in a slightly kinder backlight.

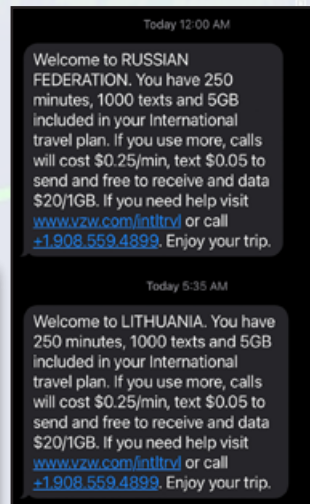


THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

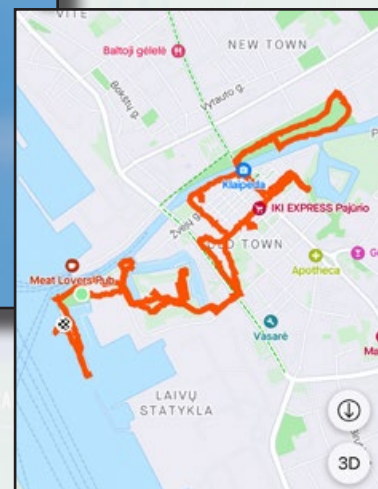
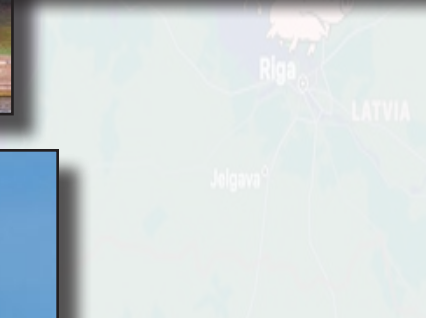
As we cruised up the Akmena-Danė river on our way to our Klaipėda berth, I noticed we had been to Russia the night before. The captain later admitted that they 'may' have cruised a little closer to shore than they should have as they passed Kaliningrad (a Russian semi-exclave and primarily a huge military complex between Lithuania and Poland).

I was intrigued by these ships as we came into Klaipėda. These are at a complex that includes the The Lithuanian Maritime Museum, an aquarium, the Museum of the Curonian Spit and the Dolphinarium. Unfortunately we did not get to visit there.



We were docked in Klaipėda for two days. One day Wendy went on a bus tour down the Curonian Spit as far as the border with Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia. The Curonian Spit is a 61 mile (98 kilometre) long, thin, curved sand-dune spit that separates the Curonian Lagoon from the Baltic Sea coast. Its southern portion lies within Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia, and its northern within southwestern Klaipėda County, Lithuania. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site shared by Lithuania and Russia.

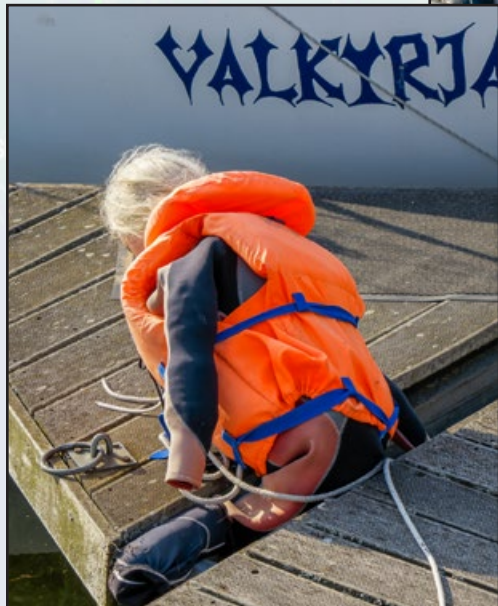
I spent the day Wendy went down the Curonian Spit exploring the town of Klaipėda on my own.



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

Straight away on my walk I came across an apparent boating accident. Turns out it was an interesting art installation.



Airmail By Pigeon Drop Box



The Black Ghost Sculpture



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA



In Lithuania, the biker movement has existed since the beginning of the 20th century. The earliest records about the first known motorcycle club in Klaipėda (then Memel), which was called "MSC MEMELLAND", can be found in the local press of 1925. In 1928, on June 11, the first motorcycle club was established in Lithuania - "Lietuvos motoklististų klubas" (LMK).

In order to commemorate the beginning of motorcycling in Lithuania, the monument to the right was built on the site of the former first car and motorcycle club, the so-called "clubhouse", which also reflects the world's first serial motorcycle model "INDIAN - SCOUT 101". One of the country's first bikers was Antanas Paškevičius - Poška, who, together with another well-known traveler Matas Šalčius, traveled from Lithuania to India on a motorcycle in 1928 and wrote a series of books about it "From the Baltic to Bengal".



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 2

GDAŃSK, POLAND & KLAIPĖDA, LITHUANIA

As a dock side boy and his dog waved us off, we were boarded by a Klaipėda pirate pilot and guided out of port, passing all kinds of ships.

We were checked out by a customs team as well.



As we exited Klaipėda and the Akmena-Danė river into the Baltic Sea, there on the jetty was a man chasing a fish with beachgoers in the distance cheering him on (or maybe it was the fish).

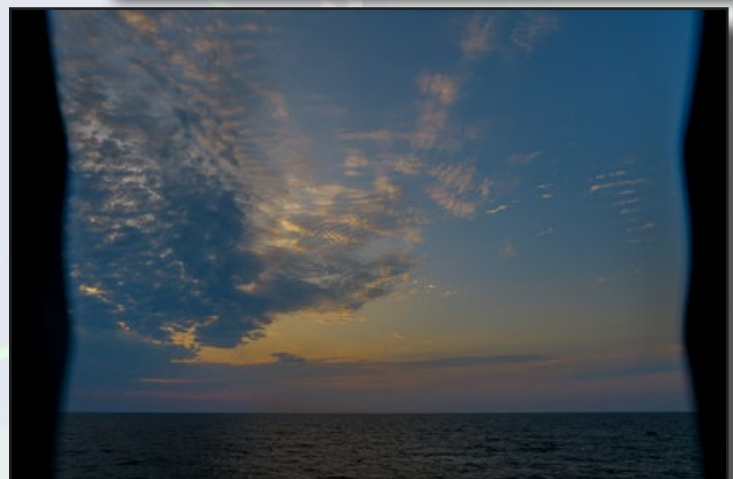


The sun soon set and I made another sunset photograph from our Situation Room balcony.

The curious dark edges in the photograph were caused by the lens sunshade / filter assembly being slightly askew, not correctly attached and about ready to drop over the balcony into the Baltic Sea.

I heard nor saw anything and did not notice the escape for some time. I do hope it is enjoying its own journey... where ever that may be...

Our next travelogue will be on our adventures in Visby, on the Island of Gotland, Sweden and Riga, Latvia.



.END