

Last of the Visa Trilogy :-)

As we sail /motor our way down the sea of Mamara. we stopped at several lovely anchorages. Mamara Island (where they cut marble out of the hill sides) .. Erdek great little town with plenty of shops, local tourists and good anchoring ...across the Erdek Korfesi to Karabiga (20 miles great sailing with the protection from the Mamara islands) .. We have three days to get to Canakkale which is now only 50 miles away so we decide we can stop for a couple of days at Karabiga :-) . Wonderful walks lots of Byzantium ruins enormous walls etc etc and wonderful cliff tops looking north to the Mamara islands.

It was here we once again had wonderful Turkish hospitality :-) We took the dinghy to shore and started walking to the ruins on the headlandThere are several houses along the road and one lady came out and called to us to come over ..after hellos and good morning etc (In our best Turkish) We where invited into the garden to meet her husband and have a cup of tea. Fortunately we had our phrase books and dictionary with us so we're able to communicate Where are we from etc etc..... how many children etc etc . After tea they presented us with tomatoes out of the garden , chilies and basil in a pot ..the lady even wanted to make us breakfast but we convinced her a cup of tea was more than adequate :-O)

We left the tomatoes and plant with them while we walked up to the ruins and picked them up on the way back ...As a thank you we brought them out to the boat at 4 pm for afternoon tea and a look ..We all had a good time :-)

Next morning up at 6.30 am and off Northerly had picked up as we punched into it once around the point :- (Fortunately it was only 8 miles before we turned west and headed towards the Dardanelles with the wind behind now :-)

Arrived in Canakkale late afternoon with two days to go on the visa :-).

Next morning into the harbour by dinghy then down to the Customs office (According to the Transit log you must go to customs first !!!) Found Customs and friendly officer who spoke English Told him we wanted to check out ... "AH" You will have to go to Harbour Master first and then police then back here !!!!! OK

Find Harbour masters office about 400 meters away.... Taken to first floor assistant "Inglize" I ask " -a little- " "OK we want to check out " Do you want a cup of tea ?? ...He has a look at our Transit log "AH! No you will need to go to Police first" !!!!!!! Then back here"OK Where?" "Not here Police in Kepez port about 10 miles away !!!!!!!... (Hold the tea we will be back :-))

So we wander around town and found a bus to Kepez Bus driver tells us when we are at Kepez NO sign of much here but the road heads down to the sea so we start walking Sitting under a tree is a policeman so we ask where is the Deniz Polis for immigration (In our best Turkish :-)) Much sign language but he indicates we need to get on a bus !!!!!!! No we don't want to go back to Canakkale No No Limani (sea) "Yes Yes Yes"

He takes us back up the road and sits us down outside his police station ...DO we want a cup of tea? No thanks (The turks will drink tea all day long if you let them ...even out shopping every shop keeper wants you to sit and have a cup of tea :-)) As we where on a mission there was no time for tea :-) Soon after the bus arrives and the policeman tells the driver where we want to go

and we hop on ...Yes it was too far to walk when we are deposited outside the HUGE port of Kepez At the gates a policewoman is instructed to take us to the immigration office This takes at least 10 minutes walking around and through buildings until we finally arrive at the office

In my best Turkish we exchange pleasantries with the young policeman (and he even makes a joke of not understanding a word we are saying ..so this is promising :-) A German yachting couple are just finishing and things have not gone well by the way she indicates to me as the policeman asks her to write down the name of their boat !!!!!!!!!!!!! ..

Anyway they leave and we take their places on the interrogation bench (only kidding :-) he looks at our passports and with some surprise says you only have one day left on your visa "Yes we know" mmmmm He is not overly happy about this ??? On our visa it says 3 months not 90 days as some do so he then starts to count to 90 in Turkish to see if we may have overstayed if you count 90 rather than 3 months at 90 days our visa will expire today !!!! but still we are OK so after a while he stamps both passports with exit stamps our Transit log and says bon voyage and that's it !!!!! NO looking at registration papers, no wanting to see our competency documents etc etc (Changes every time !!!)and he didn't ask us to come back with the copies of the transit log stamped !!!

(And no hope of an extension visa but by now we have decided we might as well head for Greece as we wouldn't want to fight our way back up the Dardanelles and across the sea of Marmara)

Back to the front gate and wait for the bus A friendly guard waves a car down leaving the port and the driver gives us a lift back to Canakkale :-)

Back to the Harbour masters office "AH" its lunch time so off we go to eat !!!!! An hour later we are back sitting with the assistant harbour master who is checking the police stamp on our transit log ... To lighten things up I say "Police no problem" , "Harbour master no problem" "AH" he says "problem" He gets on the phone .. After he has ordered our tea of course!!!! Another man arrives who speaks good english .. He indicates to me that Silver Heels is over 11 tons and therefore needs to pay port taxes !!!! Ok I say after a bit of calculating the cost is 7.77tlr about \$5 only catch is you have to go to a particular bank down town to deposit it and then return with the receipt !!!!!!!!!!!!!

After half an hour in the bank queue we head back with our receipt.

More tea ?????? No just stamp it !!!! :-) He stamps the relevant pages takes his copy and then says "Now you need to go to Customs OK " Goodbye etc etc

Down the road to the Customs man who is waiting for us with a cup of tea !!!!!!!!!!!!! Into the office check the docs stamped and we are out of there !!!!!!!!!!!!! :-)

We took our time leaving Canakkale (They weren't going to get rid of us that fast after all the hassle we had been put through !!!) and did some shopping the next day and then headed down to Amit Limani (bottom of Gallipoli peninsula where we stayed for a few days and walked all the Memorials ..Anzac cove etc etc ..

So here we sit anchored on the Greek island of Limnos ... We are anchored in Moudhros bay (Where the ill fated Gallipoli fleet based themselves and its beautiful ...We are in no rush to see any Officials and as long as you don't go into a harbour or marina you are left alone :-) Not sure where to from here ..will probably island hop for a few months before deciding where to winter :-)

So that's the news from the Aegean adventurers :-)