

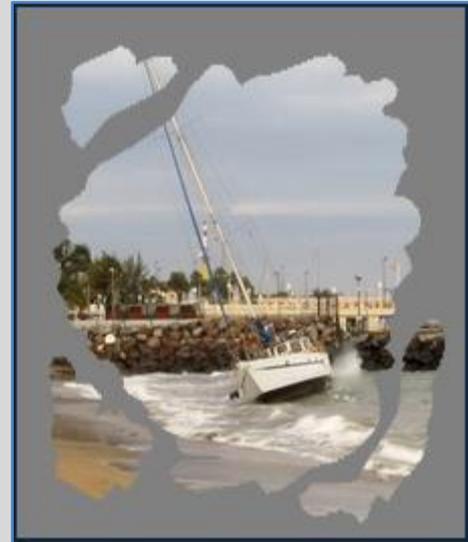
Missery at the beach & joyful moments



One day at the end of December last year, the correspondent witnessed a sad event. Walking along the beach just north of Las Palmas marina, he came across a beached German steel sailing vessel.

The sailing boat was resting in the sand and moving sideways with the waves rolling onto the beach due to the strong south-easterly wind. The few still anchored ships were awkwardly rising and falling due to the swell rolling into the currently unprotected anchorage. The unfortunate ship at the beach seemed to be broken off her anchor. The many spectators were discussing how this had been possible. The correspondent was keen to hear the comments of the more responsible and well-informed skippers amongst them.

The main topic at that moment was the long term (weeks) absence of the owner/skipper of the ship. So nobody was aboard to prevent the disaster when the ship broke loose and ended up at the beach. Luckily it did not end up at the nasty rocks, just a couple of meters



from where she landed. In general, the opinion the skipper was to blame for this foolish accident which had been a potential danger for the other anchored ships as well.



The harbour authorities were aware of the problem, but not able to do anything due to low tide at the moment. The first opportunity to pull the ship from the beach, was at high tide in about 6 hours' time. The correspondent did not had time to wait that long and went home.

The next morning, when he went to the beach again, the unlucky boat had gone. The authorities pulled it off the beach last night. The sailing boat had no visible damage or incoming seawater; therefore the authorized people towed her to the pontoon in front of the marina office. She will be moored there until her owner will appear.

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A juicy detail in this whole event was that it happened to be the second time in two years; this boat was left at anchor for a long period of time without attention of the owner and stranded on the beach.



Probable the owner will be presented with a huge bill for the rescue operation of his ship. Which is fair, the gathering of more responsible sailors told the correspondent.

When you think the festivities are over, early January you are absolutely wrong! In Spain and therefore also in the Canary Islands, Epiphany is celebrated at January 6. It is an important day, shops are closed and children have a day off.

The correspondent was informed about a special celebration which would take place at January the 5th. This day the 3 Kings or wise men arrive in Las Palmas. Each King with his entourage arrives in a separate tugboat in the Spanish Royal Navy Harbour. The special thing about this celebration and the arrival of the Three Kings in person is that they will be welcomed by thousands of children with their parents. During the arrival the children hand the Kings their list of presents they would like to have.



The happening should be a very special event in Las Palmas the correspondent was told. So he went to be able to inform you about this happening.



By coincidence he spotted the crew of Zeezwaluw and their friend Kirsten near the entrance of the Spanish Royal Navy Yard. There was no need for specific directions to reach the landing zone, just follow the massive flow of people until they stop.

The crew of Zeezwaluw was able to gain a place near the landing zone without

interfering with all the children who wanted to be in the front row to hand the King their wish list.

Once the tugboats were safely moored, each King and staff stepped on the quay to be greeted by thousands of children. The Kings were easily spotted due to the different colours of their royal clothing.

The crew could make out a red, green and blue cluster shaking hands with the very excited children, while the happy parents were busy to gain a picture of their child with one of the Kings.

The Kings walked slowly along the quayside greeting almost every child and finally they ended up at the stage in the middle of the square where the Major of Las Palmas was waiting.

After the speech (in Spanish of course) by the Major, he together with the 3-Kings set free a couple of white pigeons. Thereafter the major handed the "Head King" the Key of Las Palmas, just for the day. Now the Kings were able to go shopping and obtain the hundreds of presents to satisfy all the children that night. So after another short the speech, the Kings left and the children went home with their parents as the crew of Zeezwaluw did.





The correspondent was left to inquire where and how the evening parade would start. After shopping the 3 Kings and their entourage with all the presents were carried by camels in a grand parade from one end of Las Palmas to the other. After that parade the children should get their presents at home.

According tradition January the 6th is the holiday for special food and sweets, even for the grownups!

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