

## Guernsey Rally, 9-11/6/17

I write this report from a warm and sunny St. Peter Port, as this year's Guernsey Rally comes to a close. Yet again, the weather in Guernsey has done us proud and one look at the weather files for England just 70 miles north – well, I know where I would rather be!



Three weeks or so ago we had 12 yachts registered to attend with close on 30 people, but unfortunately weather, boat failure and ill-health slowly but surely cut down the attendance until in the end only four yachts made St. Peter Port and two of those were already cruising in Normandy and Brittany! In the last week, the weather conspired against us with near gale-force winds and rain, although in the end, Kasuku and Maui 4 enjoyed fast and

lively passages on Friday from Plymouth and Dartmouth respectively in Force 6 winds with a lumpy sea and big swells. Oronsay and Eleanora were already in St. Peter Port when Kasuku and Maui 4 arrived in the early evening – and immediately the Pontoon Party retired to Maui 4's saloon for the usual exchange of tales and the consumption of various refreshing drinks and snacks.

Saturday saw St. Peter Port present its best colours under hot, sunny skies, and our walk, with long-time friend of MOA SW and official guide, Sylvia Brouard proved a great success. With only 9 people on the walk we received very much the personal touch with 3 hours of anecdotes and facts which really brought out the different history and lifestyle of the Channel Islands. This year we progressed ever upwards in this pretty, cosmopolitan town with a whole string of 'new' historic places and views across to the neighbouring islands of Herm and Sark.



The party split at Candie Gardens, with Margaret and Nicky visiting the Tapestry Museum, and the seven menfolk following Sylvia to the WWII German Underground Communication Bunker, now situated beneath a group of bungalows at the top of the island. The Tapestry Museum contains 10 stunning tapestries made by the 10 parishes of Guernsey each

representing 100 years of the last Millenium, with some quite remarkable needlework by all age-ranges from expert specialists, Grannies, to Mums, Dads and even children from across the island!

The Communication Bunker was equally remarkable. Communication by coded messages came initially from headquarters in Paris and, as the Channel Islands became more isolated following the 'D' day landings, increasingly directly with Berlin. Some years ago, the ex-commander of the Communication Centre visited his old command and was disturbed to hear that all his messages were being decoded in Bletchley Park!

The Rally dinner was held once again at the excellent Moore's Hotel. The 9 intrepid crew members were joined by MOA members and local residents, Derek and Sue Knowles, with all 11 of us able to sit around a single square table in a private room. All agreed that this and the excellent food of the hotel contributed to one of the most convivial evenings – which then continued into the early Sunday hours with the obligatory 'wee drams' in – you know where!

Eleanora and Oronsay left early on Sunday morning for the passage back to England, leaving an even smaller select group to enjoy an excellent Sunday lunch in the Guernsey Yacht Club. All in all, it has been a most enjoyable event, only marred by the eventually poor attendance due mostly to the inclement weather conditions in the north. We will try harder in future years to book better weather for the crossing, although we cannot fault the weather here in Guernsey!