

The Pantaenius Plymouth Fireworks Rally, 7-10/8/18

For once we all enjoyed fine weather for our sail to Plymouth for the, by now, traditional rally, set to coincide with the National Fireworks Competition. 5 boats arrived from ports outside of Plymouth, the furthest afield being Le Bear from Neyland Marina, Milford Haven with Bob and Ruth Keys and their friends John and Viv Thurman. The crews of a further 6 to 8 locally-berthed boats participated in different elements of the programme with a total of 36 members attending the final dinner.



The event began with a welcome party on Tuesday on the balcony of Sutton Harbour Marina offices, a warmer event than last year and with drinks and nibbles enough for a full meal! It was especially good to see Barbara and Mike Arnold (Salsa) now looking very well, surprising us all with their unexpected attendance!

22 of us boarded a bus on Wednesday morning for Morwellham Quay. This is a living museum of life as it was in the 18th and 19th centuries, in a small mining town on the banks of the river Tamar. It was full of surprises, the first being the downpour which greeted us as we munched our pasties for lunch! After such a long, dry and hot summer, few were properly prepared for a day of showers. Fortunately, the highlight of the day, a trip on a mine haulage railway, was underground for most of the time! Our excellent guide explained not only some details of the extraction technique for the copper ore, but also something of the industry at the time which was in turmoil then much as it is still today.



That evening we watched the displays of the first three National Fireworks competitors from various vantage points; the six crew on Maui 4 choosing Maui's foredeck with comfortable seating on the dinghy and a good supply of tippie.

The next day was free until the late afternoon visit to Princess Yachts' construction yard. For us the day was taken up with boat visits and the necessary call on the Marine Bazaar (the Aladdin's cave of SW England).



Thirty of us boarded the bus for Princess Yachts. The site is where many, if not most, of our yachts were moulded. Certainly, the gentleman who took us round was yard manager when Maui 4 was built. Times have moved on and some of the immense motor yachts now under construction will have tenders bigger than our boats! The statistics and the technology are stunning. The 'low' pound has filled their order books to which production lines of multi-million pound boats are testimony. Personally,

it reminded me of a maritime Dubai – enough said! But it is great so see such a thriving venture in the UK.

The bus took us on to the Waterfront Restaurant for dinner and our excellent viewpoint for the final three Firework displays. With more joining for dinner, 36 of us sat down to a fun, if noisy, meal. This is one of the best vantage points to view the firework displays, which take place on Mount Batten pier head. The competition was so good that I still don't know who won! They were all winners to me.

Our thanks go to Graham and Pauline Marsh (Mooditoo) who arranged and managed the excellent programme.

Tony Wildig

