

Falmouth – Scillies Rally, 28th to 30th June 2019

The principal objective of this rally was to gather up-river from Falmouth on a pontoon south of Malpas on Friday 28th, then visit Truro and its cathedral on Saturday, with a dinner party in the Heron Inn that evening. The secondary objective involving fewer yachts was to cruise in company to the Isles of Scilly from Sunday 30th onwards.

The weather proved a challenge, with easterly gales forecast in sea area Plymouth from the Wednesday through Friday leading up to the rally. Maui 4 (Tony and Margaret Wildig, Keith and Nicky Bunker) spent Thursday in Plymouth, then made a run for Falmouth on Friday together with Kasuku (Peter Roberts and Rob Barnfield) – 5-1/2 hours according to MarineTraffic.com at between 7 and 8 knots! We arrived just in time for the Pontoon party; just as well because we had the food, drink and tables on board!

The turn-out was impressive with crews from some 12 boats (but not all with boats!) involved at one time or another. There were many for the pontoon party to enjoy Margaret's guacamole made in our galley as we progressed up the river Fal! Pauline Cheshire again produced scrumptious scones, clotted cream and jam. Len Cheshire's flawless preparation was fortunately flexible both on numbers and berthing since the Channel gales led to congestion on the supposedly-reserved pontoon.

Saturday morning saw most of the party gather on Sweet Friday (Len and Pauline Cheshire) and Cariad (David and Clarissa Rymer), which yachts



acted as ferries to get us to Malpas where the HM had given us permission to moor them on his pontoon. From there the party split in two. Half walked the long '2 miles' along the riverside road to Truro, the other half took a mini-bus/taxi. With a free morning and lunch, we took time to visit the superb museum. I certainly need more time to explore the amazing

geological section. We all gathered again at 2pm for a guided tour of the Cathedral. Although the Cathedral is itself relatively recent, being built in the 19th Century, it was based on the site of a much older parish church much of which was incorporated. The guide's anecdotes were very entertaining – so many stories around the rich history of Cornwall, much recorded in the stained-glass windows and other artefacts within the Cathedral.





We again walked or took the taxi back to Malpas for the evening dinner at the Heron Inn. Here we were joined by the rest of the rally bringing our numbers for dinner up to 24. The meal was excellent, if a little prolonged –and judging from the noise levels the ‘craic’ was excellent! It was a happy party that returned to the pontoon in the dark on our ‘ferries’.

Sunday was set for socialising and preparation to sail out to the Isles of Scilly. Five boats were to gather at anchor in Coverack on the east side of the Lizard peninsular for Sunday evening

after some had restocked with food, water and fuel in Falmouth. Unfortunately, Eleanor (John and Jane Atkinson) had to drop out with battery problems which took specialist aid to solve – fortunately not the engine start battery.

Monday morning saw only three boats head out around the Lizard motoring into a nasty head wind and sea, on top of the usual problems of the Lizard race. Cariad already decided to head back to Falmouth. Kasuku and Maui 4 headed onward in



progressively improving seas but still motoring into that headwind. Flying Pig (Eric and Pat Lowe) decided to cut short the discomfort and head for Newlyn, so in the end only two boats arrived in St. Helen’s Pool – our favoured anchorage in the Scillies. However! Mark Cornish, alone on Shinroc had contacted me that he would try and join us. He had spent a few days at anchor off Mousehole. Unfortunately, he, too, had battery problems and left by dinghy, folding bicycle and train for Plymouth for a new engine battery early that Monday morning. I was

astonished to receive a telephone call from him around 7pm that evening announcing that he was already in sight of us, making his approach to St. Helen's! After an adventure of a day carrying battery and bike back to his boat, he still set out from Mousehole to cross to the Scillies, alone, to join us – quite above and beyond the call of duty! Well done, Mark!

On Tuesday we took dinghies to St. Martin's Island on a glorious day which had the islands looking as if in the Caribbean. The Karma Hotel above the beach in Lower Town made a splendid lunch spot.

Shinroc and Kasuku left on Wednesday back to the mainland, and Flying Pig arrived in St. Helen's Pool with fresh supplies for another dinner on board Maui 4. We in turn left on Thursday morning for two long days of motoring against the prevailing Easterlies, anchoring overnight in Durgan on the Helford River, and then above Salcombe before arriving home in Dartmouth on Saturday.

Overall it was a very successful rally and thanks again to our wonderful hosts, Len and Pauline Cheshire, for the excellent organisation. The onward trip to the Scillies was less successful in that only the experienced old-timers finally made the crossing, but it is something to be repeated in future years.

Tony Wildig

