

Finally, after months of waiting, many of the restrictions were lifted in the UK allowing us back on our yachts. The uncertainty of Covid restrictions meant many of this year's events were not booked until the last minute. This was also coupled with a very unusual year for weather and not the usual consistent summer weather we have been used too. On Sea Pigeon we managed to make our way to the Isles of Scilly after much hunkering down in the valleys of the river Fal and waiting for a weather window. Eventually the weather turned and we had a great day sail across to the Isles of Scilly.



After a long wait for the weather, we eventually made The Isles of Scilly

After only a short, three-day visit a storm forecast 60mph wind plus, forced us to head back to the River Fal again. During our return journey we saw a friend on the AIS going in the opposite direction. I called him on the VHF “have you seen the weather forecast?”. His reply was “I have booked this week off, my friend has booked this week off, we are going!”. He survived on a mooring but it was very uncomfortable. Many boats who found themselves in the Isles of Scilly that week were driven onto the shore. We spent a pleasant, sociable week moored on a pontoon far up the river Fal waiting for the storm to pass.

The first of the South West MOA rallies was on the very same pontoon some days later. Falmouth itself was buzzing from the recent G7 meeting that took place there. The Harbour was still buzzing with stories about the security guards surrounding the delegates, including the US president, and the tented village

erected for world media. However, peace and tranquillity were to be found up-river on the pontoon above the ferry. Our Rally welcomed 9 boats and 26 people including 2 new members. It is nice to see that the South West MOA continues to grow and involve new members.



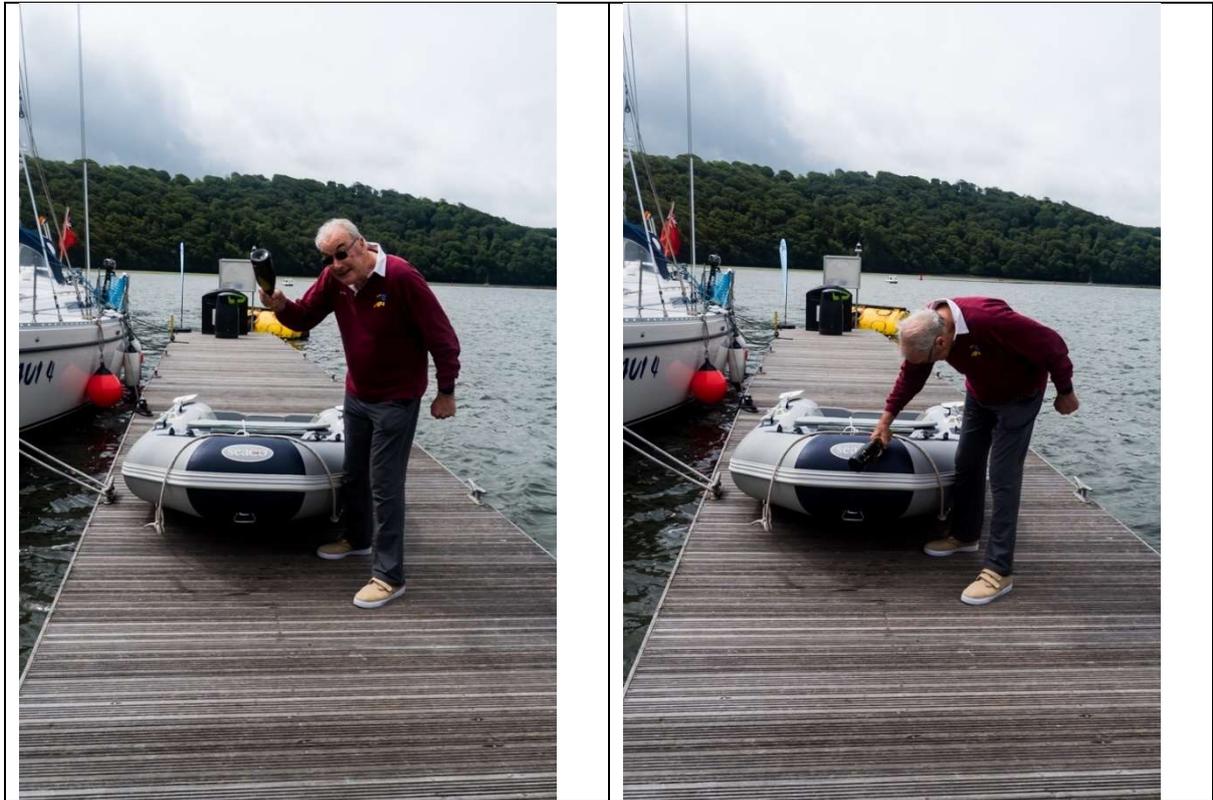
All moored up on the pontoon up the river Fal

Friday saw the arrival of the members and boats onto the pontoon. After everyone was safely moored up, we had a meet and greet with a traditional cream tea of scones, clotted cream and jam. Every member was closely watched to see in which order it was cream and jam was applied as we were in deepest Cornwall. The afternoon then drifted into the ever popular and traditional pontoon party.



A traditional cream tea on the Friday afternoon.

On Saturday people had the choice of a visit to Trelissick House or small boats trip up the river to the shallow sections. The exploration in the tenders had some fantastic birdlife to be seen. On the top of the hill was a herd of deer grazing in the summer meadows. This was Tony's first time using his new tender. So, before he launched it on the pontoon the obligatory champagne ceremony to christen the tender.



Tony Christening his new tender with a bottle of bubbly

Saturday evening had as all in the water taxi going down river for a meal and few drinks at the Pandora Inn.



A taxi ride down the river for a meal at the Pandora Inn.

After a long summer break the South West MOA assembled at Plymouth for the international fireworks competition. We based ourselves Plymouth Yacht Haven. We had a good turn out with 14 boats and 38 people. We also had 4 new members join us along with 4 children. Two nights of fireworks, a trip to



Mayflower exhibition inside the Box, a new exhibition centre in Plymouth, where there are some incredible artifacts in there from the Mayflower as well as original manuscripts and logs from the ship. A guided tour of the Plymouth Gin factory kept us entertained, interesting to see the massive vats and learn about the ingredients and techniques used to make gin. Many thanks to Pantaenius boat insurance, who have been our long-time sponsors, for providing us with an ample supply of Gin and Tonic to go with our other drinks and snacks of delights.

Plymouth Gin Factory Tour.

The location for the second night of the International Firework Competition was spectacular. The Waterfront Restaurant provided a splendid dinner the best view in town. After the perfect weather for watching the fireworks, it was back onto our coach transport for the return journey back to our boats.

The view over the sound for the fireworks

This season has been a welcome break to get back onto the water. This year our yacht Sea Pigeon has clocked up over 1100 miles. Our plan in the summer was to leave the Isles of Scilly and travel to Southern Ireland. But an announcement from the Channel Islands stating they were once again open to visiting yachts changed our mind. Our decision was based on we would rather travel South than North. So, within a day of St. Peter Port re-opening for visitors, we found ourselves crossing the channel. Once we had cleared the quarantine pontoon, we were free to explore and spent a week at anchor at



various locations around the islands.



Moored up of sark in Sea Pigeon

It has been brilliant fun to bump into so many other MOA members on our travels. Here in the South West, we regularly saw members from the Solent branch which was wonderful. Many of our travels have been uploaded to our you tube channel. “The Adventures of Sea Pigeon”.

The final rally of the South West branch was at Brixham. Again, we were lucky to catch a good weather window. We had secured the visitors pontoon for the event. We had 10 yachts and 24 people enjoying the weekend. Saturday morning was a fantastic clifftop walk up to Berry Head. This has incredible views and is festooned with an incredibly diverse range of sea birds nesting on the cliffs. Other members strolled into town for a drink and the traditional fish and chips



Looking back to the visitor’s pontoon at Brixham

Saturday evening was a short walk to the Berry Head Hotel. After a few drinks on the patio watching the sun go down over Torbay it was inside for our evening meal. The food and service here was really good and a great time was had by all.



A few drinks on the patio of the Berry Head Hotel



A good turn out for the last rally of 2021

The AGM will be in Exeter this year on 4th and 5th of February 2022 at the Mercure Southgate Hotel.

During this weekend, we have an interesting itinerary of visits planned. A tour of Exeter Cathedral as well as a Red Coat guided tour around the quayside. Our Dinner on Saturday evening has a guest speaker from the MET office who will talk around the weather and wind patterns from a sailing perspective.

Hoping to see everyone there.

Neil Ewins.