

South Branch Cardiff Rally, 11th to 14th September 2009

The South West Branch Rally to Cardiff Marina was our final sailing event of the 2009 season and the weather could not have been better. The Captain and his Branch Officers were very conscious that to travel from the Northern parts of the Branch to many of our events is not possible for people with limited time, so we wanted to hold an event where members from the Bristol Channel area and Welsh Ports could attend. The July Rally to the Scillies was aimed at providing an opportunity for South West Branch members from both North and South of the region could attend. The plan was for a pincer movement on Tresco (in the Scilly Isles) with boats from Weymouth to Falmouth on the South East Coast and the Bristol Channel and Welsh Ports from the North. Lord Nelson would have been proud of our tactics! However, in the event, this plan was defeated by the weather so when Peter Satchel, our Cardiff and Swansea Port Officer, suggested a Cardiff based rally it was readily taken on board. Peter made all the



arrangements, including a terrific deal with the Marina of £10 per berth. In addition to the boats that took part, two members drove to Cardiff. This was due to the sailing distances involved, which would have taken a week to travel around Lands End, and because one owner was on-call and needed a car to respond if needed.

Boats and people started to assemble on Friday morning (11th September) and in the afternoon Peter took the Branch Captain and a prospective boat owner (hopefully a Moody) around Flat Holm and Steep Holm for an exploratory sail. By the time they had locked back into the bay and moored up, others had arrived and we all meet up for an Indian meal.

On the Saturday a number of the members cruised across Cardiff Bay to visit the Welsh Assembly Building for a self conducted tour. The Assembly Building is impressive and its architecture, in particular the ceiling, is quite unique. In the evening we all assembled at the Custom House in Penarth where we had an excellent meal and good company.

On Sunday morning the fleet locked out of the bay and sailed around Flat Holm and Steep Holm – not all in the same direction. The weather was great for sailing



in the Bristol Channel, winds being typically F3 to F4 and the sea fairly smooth; although tides around the islands stir up some lumpy seas. Locking into and out of Cardiff Bay is easy, although the approach channel at low water has to be navigated with care as the Port



Hand Buoy is high and dry. Unlike many locks, those leading into Cardiff Bay have rising pontoons so mooring is easy and lines need not be eased as the water rises and falls.

After mooring up at the Marina the pyromaniacs set the Bar-b-q on fire and the food prepared and cooked (the picture shows a selection of members around the table). Peter had generously provided a nice array of fare and a good time was had by all. We

were pleased to be able to entertain the owner of the Marina, who had provided the facilities for the Bar-b-q and been so helpful in the overall arrangements. On behalf of the SW Branch I would like to convey our thanks to Cardiff Marina for providing such excellent facilities. Amongst the boats that were represented included a Moody 33, two Moody Eclipse 33s, two Moody 31s and a Moody 28. This gave prospective the new owners a chance to discuss the attributes of owning a Moody with experienced owners and extend the reputation of the marque.

Despite the short notice the whole event was most successful and all had a very pleasant weekend; and Peter could not have ordered better weather. Without exception members asked us to hold a similar event 2010 and Peter offered to make the arrangements.

As Captain of the SW Branch, and I know that I speak for all those who attended, I would like to go on record to thank Peter for the idea, for his generosity in providing much of the food and drink and for his unstinting work in making the arrangements and running the event so well.

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