

Darramy on tour No. 8: Caribbean Stories
December 2007 - March 2008

Well here we are again, we last left off, as we were packing up to go to Tobago. We got there after an overnight passage in the company of Malarkey (Trevor and Jo), we checked in with customs and immigration, and went to enjoy ourselves, having already been there in the summer we thought we knew our way about. So there's not much new to tell you. We move to Charlottesville in the North of the Island to Man of War Bay (great name!) here we fell foul of the customs people, they told us that we should have checked in with them, we explained we had checked in already at the capital Scarborough, this did not wash and we were summoned to appear at 12.00p.m. the next day. We appeared, and after a brief telling off we were allowed to stay if we complied with their rules, or they would have to fine us, if we wanted to go anywhere else we had to ask their permission, (something to do with justifying their jobs we think!) so we asked and were granted permission to go to Anse Bateau, which is the nicest anchorage on the Island. Here we



Comment [DEL1]:

dived and enjoyed true Tobagan hospitality, we met up with another boat from the US (Arctic Tern) whom we had met a few times before at various anchorages so it was nice to catch up on their travels. After being there a week it was time to move we had hoped to rendezvous with Kim, and Wendy for Xmas in Antigua, but the weather had other ideas, the wind blew from



the North, so we had a very fast and exciting sail from Tobago to Grenada instead, and ended up spending a delightful Christmas day on Malarkey together with Vicki and Roger (El Vagabond), as you can imagine we got out the decent wine and port and made a proper day of it. Jo and Trevor put on an excellent Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, Prior to that on Christmas Eve we went carol singing in the dinghy around the boats in Prickly Bay, we were

made welcome and eventually made it back on board just before Santa visited Darramy!! (The First Noel hic!)

We headed north on the 27th, December, and although the wind did not look like making our trip to Antigua an easy one we set off day sailing, to cut a long story short, it was not the best trip in the world, but even sailing in the Caribbean has its

down side, we had New Years Eve in Martinique, and carried on going North each day, we got to Dominica and anchored, no sooner done than a boat boy was upon us what do we need? He could get anything. We asked for some Tuna, he said no problem boss its £4.00 a kilo, I thought he said lb's so I said ok but please ensure we get a good steak, he came back with the biggest steaks you have ever seen talk about door steps, it lasted 2 days!

We arrived in Antigua by 4th January and met Kim and Wendy, who had been patiently waiting our arrival, so we celebrated Christmas and New Year again and



Another tough day in the office

caught up with all the news, we spent quite some time in Antigua, the island has some lovely beaches, we swam most days, it felt that the struggle to get there had been worth it, but questioned our plan to go on to Cuba this season, it seemed a place to far, and we had our sites set on Venezuela for the

hurricane season. So we enjoyed Antigua, We were privileged to watch some of the transatlantic rowers arrive, these guys had left Gomera in the Canaries some two-

month before to compete in the Woodvale rowing race to Antigua. We watched the 1st boat arrive, a four man boat, the welcome they received was tremendous, steel bands and a true carnival atmosphere, although we were both proud of our own



First Atlantic rowers

achievement in crossing the Atlantic, these guys made you feel very humble. Over the next few weeks many more boats arrived all to a heroes welcome.



Money no object!!

Amy and Matt came out to see us for a week, well actually, they had also booked a hotel for a few days, it seems that a week with Dad may be just to much, also Matt did not have his sea legs, and after we had gone out for a sail, he just wanted to get on dry land, he did say just lets go back to the Marina and tie up "money is no object" what a great son in law he looks to be I already am working on his benevolent side!! We tied up in historic English harbour which has the old ship yard called Nelsons Dockyard (now restored) a great British base from where we used to take on the

French and usually whop them (according to our history) in the Napoleonic wars, after Waterloo things quietened down and the base went into decline, but restoration started in the 1960s, and still goes on today, it is a good safe harbour and a great tourist attraction.

We also went to see a 20-20 cricket match one in the series Grenada verses Anguilla. We had never been to a proper cricket match, but felt if you are going to one the Caribbean is the place to watch it, the atmosphere was amazing not a bit like the boring (my opinion) games at home, this was full of life, every stroke counted, we were issued with large cards



with 4 or 6 on, so whenever the appropriate run was scored we had to stand up and cheer, people were blowing bugles and trumpets as well, it really was a marvellous experience. Grenada won by the way.

After Amy and Matt had gone we made plans to head to St Maarten so we left early one morning for St Barts, by 8.30a.m. we had caught two tuna, so were lost for something to do!! We did have a good sail though arriving in Gustavia late afternoon; we spent a rolly night on anchor before leaving the next morning for St Maarten.

St Maarten is quite strange one half is Dutch, and the other half is French, we went to the Dutch half and anchored in the Lagoon in Simpson Bay, we were amazed what a busy place this was, the chandlers were amazing, we have never seen so many things to be available, it is a duty free island so we were able to do some much needed maintenance, replace batteries and many other boring nautical things that need to be done.

It seems that some of you think we just laze around all day, drinking Rum Punch etc, this is very far from the truth, although the climate may be far more favourable than at home, hardly a day goes by without some sort of maintenance being done. We like to think we have our own little city to run, to start with there's the sanitation department, then the water making plant, never mind the power station, well, 3 solar panels and a wind/water generator! We have to have food and gas to cook by. The other day we spent 4 hours trying to locate a source of supply for camping gaz. We were told it was obtainable from the French side so off we go in the dinghy over to France. The trick when you are looking for something is to ask a likely looking person where to get gas, not easy, we picked the wrong person every time and walked about 5 miles carrying the empty cylinders. Eventually we found a supplier about a quarter of a mile from where we started off!! So its not all play you know. It's always fun arriving at a new place, sourcing food suppliers, where internet is available, where can you get laundry done, and many of the mundane everyday things you take for granted when you are based in your home town, but that is part of the fun, we never really know what is going to happen each day!

Kim and Wendy caught up with us again and we went to Oyster Pond their home port on the island, to celebrate Wendy's birthday in style, Bucks Fizz for breakfast, Kim, was so made up that he took us all out for a superb meal that night as well.



We returned to the Lagoon as we were having problems with the engine. After various tests we discovered that the new engine had had the wrong exhaust fitted, so that had to be replaced, and whilst writing are investigating another fault that has developed.

Looks like the engine has to come out again (£££ \$\$\$ ouch). Can't at this moment raise and exclamation mark)



In the mean time we sailed up to Anguilla for a few days R&R. Whilst most of the anchorages are restricted (only by cost I must add,) We had a great time at Road Bay, a beautiful white sandy beach, some good diving as well it was a lovely spot.

Back to St Maarten again and yes, it is confirmed the engine has to come out the next week, so as we had a spell of settled weather we sailed down to the island of Saba, a Dutch Island, which has only had a road for 50 years, and used to be very inaccessible, they now have a small airport, and a small harbour. What a magic place, very different from any other Island we have so far visited. It had an oldie world charm about it, all the properties were voluntarily kept to a similar style, quite unique, and as it is so inaccessible we felt privileged to visit. The whole area is a marine park and we had been told the diving was some of the best in the Caribbean. The water was so



clear even 100 feet down the colours of the coral were astounding; with the tropical fish the whole place was stunning. Also there is some hiking on the island, so it was good to do a bit of proper walking for a change, I discovered that Mt Scenic was the

highest mountain in the Dutch Kingdom although only 2877 feet, it had to be done. As, some of you may recall I had already done the highest in Portugal and also Spain whilst being in the Azores and the Canaries respectively. So although not that high it was a good climb only to be thwarted of the view by cloud at the top! Its quite strange on time or date recognition as we don't wear watches, or know what day it is half the time; Whilst walking on Saba, I came across a gentleman cutting down palm leaves, I enquired what this was all about, he explained it was for his church the next day as it was Palm Sunday, it was then I realised Easter was only a week away, time does not half fly by.

What else is there to tell you, oh yes, we plan to be back in Antigua for the Classic Sailing Week in April, Sue, Pete and Max are coming out for two weeks so that should be fun, then we will make our way down to Venezuela in June to do some exploring in South America, before coming home for a few weeks sometime in September ish.

If you have opened the file with pictures, this is something we have been working on, we are not sure whether to get a blog site or maybe a web site, but we have now added pictures to all our travel logs from when we left nearly 3 years ago. If any of you would like a picture copy please let us know. Naturally immediate family are going to get one like it or not! But the rest of you have a choice! We have found it's quite a nice record for us to keep. If any of you have experience of web sites etc we would love to have some tips.

Don't forget you can still see our progress albeit slow, on the Pangolin site, we try and update each week, not always succeeding, but make a conscious effort to update when we move. http://www.pangolin.co.nz/yotreps/reporter_list.php (add to your favourites) go down the list until you come to MBDF4 or Darramy, click on that and it should show you where we are,

So, that's about it for now, take care and Happy Easter to all of you
(Delete as applicable)

Best Wishes *Kindest Regards* *Love and Hugs* *Cheers*

Brian and Sue

Sorry, had to put this one in, a goat in a tree Antigua! Feb 2008
Have you ever seen the like, and this was after only one beer!

