

June 18, 2004

After clearing in with customs and immigration Tuesday morning, June 8, we re-anchored in the yacht anchorage adjacent to the town of St. George. The harbor water, a beautiful turquoise in color, was amazingly clear. We could see our anchor in 30 feet. Two cruise ships were in when we arrived. Since we had been up most of Monday night, we spent much of Tuesday sleeping.

Before arriving in Bermuda, we had not realized the extent of tourism and the cruise ship industry on the local economy. It was their main source of income with the Bermuda dollar at par with the U.S. dollar. During the cruise ship season from April to November, four cruise ships (and sometimes five) made weekly round trips from the northeast coast of the United States (New York, Philadelphia, and Boston) to Bermuda. They started arriving on Monday and then all, except one, rotated during the week between St. George's and Hamilton (the main city), and sometimes the Royal Naval Dockyard. The last cruise ship left St. George's at midday Friday. Then, all was quiet until the cruise ships started arriving again on Monday.



Our stay in Bermuda was full of many memories. Everywhere we looked, white rooftops dotted the landscape. Up close, these quarry limestone rooftops were terraced to catch the rainwater. This was the source of water for most people. To keep the roofs clean, they were whitewashed and periodically treated with Clorox. The month before we arrived there had been little rain, and the limited water supply was noticeable upon our arrival.

While in Bermuda we always felt safe walking the streets. In the evening, the sounds of the tree frogs could be heard as we walked along, their noise usually coming from peoples' planter boxes. We found thoroughly enjoyable the "genuine" friendliness of the people. Presently, the population of Bermuda was around 62,000 people, 70% black and 30% white. Like in Britain, people in Bermuda drove on the left side of the road, but unlike in Britain, there weren't many British accents. "Bermuda" shorts were worn by everyone. Food and fuel were expensive in Bermuda, often 50% to 100% more expensive than the same items in the United States.



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On Wednesday and Thursday we enjoyed some time ashore exploring the small quaint historic town of St. George and its surrounding area. Its beginnings went back to the 1600's and the settlement of the Jamestown Colony in America. In 1609, the Sea Venture, carrying supplies to the starving colony in Jamestown, was shipwrecked off the uninhabited Bermuda coastline. While ashore, we saw a replica of the Deliverance, one of two ships built by the stranded survivors to continue their journey to Virginia in 1610. This led to the colonization of Bermuda by the British in 1612. In the town square we saw some of the 17th century forms of punishment from the stocks to the ducking stool, used first to "swim" those suspected of witchcraft and then later for those women convicted of "gossiping and nagging." The ducking stool punishment was now reenacted for the tourists at different times during the week.

On Friday we planned to do some sightseeing, but "Mother Nature" decided differently. A front was to pass through during the day with 25 to 30 knot winds, and it was necessary for us to stay onboard the boat in case problems arose. So instead of sightseeing, we watched the state funeral of President Ronald Reagan on board the boat via local TV. In Bermuda there were three TV channels; all carried it live. It was a beautiful ceremony, and it was a wonderful respite from all the "other" U.S. news constantly being heard.



By early afternoon, with the winds picking up to 30 knots, there were some exciting moments in the anchorage when a few boats dragging their anchors headed our direction. Even the Bermuda police boat was helping in the situation as one of the boats dragging their anchor was not on board. By late afternoon, we finally decided to move across the bay to a less crowded yacht anchorage with more swinging room. Now, the dinghy ride to town was 8 minutes versus 4 minutes. We stayed at this new anchorage the rest of our stay in Bermuda. These strong wind conditions continued on throughout Friday night with gusts to 40 knots. That night KUHELA rocked and rolled and the wind howled through the rigging. Saturday afternoon the winds subsided to 20-25 knots, but these winds continued on until midday Sunday as the direction of the wind backed around.



*Town Square*



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On Monday we finally did some sightseeing and used the local bus system to visit the Royal Naval Dockyard and the Bermuda Maritime Museum on the other side of Bermuda. It was also a Bermuda holiday celebrating the Queen's Birthday, and as we traveled along on the bus Bermudians could be seen enjoying the day at the beach and having picnics and BBQ's.



*Royal Navy Dock Yards*

After the American War of Independence, the Royal Navy needed a new dockyard on the western side of the Atlantic. English convicts and slaves were used in the early 1800's to build this dockyard and fortress Keep. For 150 years until 1951, the Royal Navy's main western Atlantic facility was located here in Bermuda. Now, the Bermuda Maritime Museum was housed inside the Dockyard Keep. We thoroughly enjoyed this museum with its many exhibits showing Bermuda's rich maritime history. Especially interesting were the displays showing the changes and advances made in vessels and ordnance throughout 400 years and the importance that Bermuda played in both World Wars I and II.



*Gombey Dancers*

On Tuesday we first took the ferry from St. George's to the Dockyard and then traveled by bus. We first visited Gibb's Hill Lighthouse, built in 1846 of cast iron. We climbed the 185 steps and had excellent views of the island from the top. From there we walked down to the waterfront and proceeded along the beaches and small coves that jutted this coastline from Horseshoe Bay to Warwick Long Bay. The beaches in Bermuda were few in number, but these beaches along the south shore with their beautiful pink sand, clear water, and limestone outcroppings carved by the sea were exquisite. Up close, the fine pink sand really consisted of many red flecks. These were actually the remains of a tiny organism known as the red foram which grew in abundance on the undersides of the rocks in Bermuda. In the evening we enjoyed "Market Night" in St. George's town square put on by the local businesses and artists for the tourists. Besides the "nag" being ducked, we were entertained by the colorful, energetic Bermudian Gombey dancers.

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*Bermuda Pink Sand Beaches*



Wednesday and Thursday we prepared the boat for sea, washed clothes, and bought the necessary food for the passage. Thursday evening we checked out of Bermuda. Friday, after doing the final stowing, we went alongside the fuel dock to take on water and fuel. Because water was at a premium in Bermuda, we were able to get water only if we bought fuel, and then it cost 15 cents/gallon. The diesel and gas cost \$1.14 per liter (about \$4.33/gallon), making this our most expensive fuel stop and the first time we've ever had to pay for water. Just like our arrival, we had to clear our departure with Bermuda Harbor Radio. After a memorable 10 day stay in Bermuda, we passed through the narrow channel at 2:30 p.m. Friday, June 18, and started sailing toward the Azores.

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