

Just because many of us live on boats and have nowhere for a feeder, you can still attract a number of birds this winter if you put a small piece of wood on your roof and change the food and water regularly.

During the colder months, dawn and dusk are the key times of the day that birds need to eat. Robins prefer bird tables to a feeder and blackbirds, thrushes and chaffinches prefer to feed on the ground.

It is also important to provide the birds with access to clean water to drink and bathe in and this should be regularly changed. If you do fill bird feeders make sure that any rotten food is cleaned out and the feeder thoroughly cleaned with a thin disinfectant solution. Putting out a good mixed feed will encourage most birds and provide them with essential energy. Fat balls (seeds mixed with fat) have become a popular addition to the bird table and are readily available. If you do buy fat balls in a nylon



Pecking Orders

mesh bag, always remember to remove it because birds can get their claws caught in the mesh, potentially trapping them. Mealworms are a good source of protein. They are packed with

protein and will quickly attract birds such as robins and thrushes. Another food high in fats and protein are peanuts (not salted). These are a great favourite with tits, finches, nut-hatches and woodpeckers. Try to buy premium peanuts as they have been checked to ensure they do not carry toxins. Just don't leave them out into the spring, as they can choke young birds. Sunflower seeds are also rich in proteins and fats but they require a lot of effort from birds to remove the husks. Finally niger seeds attract finches, however they are tiny and will fall straight through most feeders.

The Wildlife Group plan to have their successful bird feeding stand at the Christmas Market on 2 December.

Mercia supports local arts

The winners of this year's art competition have recently been announced and the overall winner was local resident Pauline Allen (top). In the Amateur Category the winner was another local resident Emily Politt (middle) and the Professional winner was our own David Tattersall (bottom). Twenty-plus artists submitted paintings, digital art and mixed media pieces to create a beautiful display of high quality art. Painting was the most popular theme this year with more than 150 people voting at the show in Willington Village Hall. The event was a big success.



Widows on the Cut

A new closed Facebook group has recently been started called 'Widows On The Cut'. Any women who have found themselves in this traumatic situation can go to the page and request to join the group.

The site seeks to provide a safe and confidential place to share emotions, discuss feeling and share experiences, as grief can feel more complex to deal with when living on a boat.

Founder Jacqueline Biggs, a boater herself, says: "We offer a place of comfort and hopefully we can help each other find a way forward as we get to know each other".

Transport Co-ordinator wanted

The marina office has a list of drivers willing to help those without a car with doctors appointments, dentists, shopping trips etc.

What's needed is a volunteer who can act as a co-ordinator for this scheme.

They will take calls from people needing a lift, take their details, and find a driver who is available.

Contributions to petrol costs are welcome, but optional.

So if you would like to take on this role, or wish to be added to the list of the 'Good Samaritans' able to offer lifts to fellow Mercians, then please let the Marina office know.



community fund

The Community Fund helps members of our community during difficult times. It is funded solely by members of our community via donations and distributed anonymously to people who simply need support. We offer help in a sensitive way so that pride and dignity are treated with the utmost respect. Last Christmas, support was given to over 10 moorers.

Here's a quote from one recipient:

"The support I received meant that I have coal, electric, fuel in the car and food in the fridge. It's been a while since all these boxes were ticked at the same time. I will also sleep well tonight as a result of all these things, so thank you."

You can donate to the fund by putting

a cash amount in an envelope (with your name if you wish), mark it for the Community Fund and drop it into the office. Any amount is gratefully received.

The fund is looked after by Louise Davies & Robert Neff and all details are confidential. If you wish to access the fund or think that someone needs support, please let them know.

You can do this by either seeing Robert, messaging Louise on 07881 450221 or by dropping a note into the office asking one of them to contact you.

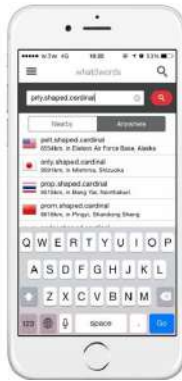


REMEMBRANCE DAY *Let's We Forget*

Throughout November, there will be a display of several hundred red and purple poppies (purple to remember animals who took part in the Great War) knitted and crocheted by folks from the Marina. They will be spiralled around the pillars of the bandstand and hung from the roof joists. There will also be a 'Memorial Walk' along the Boardwalk with sixteen black and white boards affixed to the railings which recognise the sixteen Willington men who lost their lives in World War One.

There are purple poppy lapel pin-on badges in the Marina Office in support of The War Horse Memorial. The Memorial, which was unveiled on 8 June this year and is the first national memorial dedicated to the millions of UK, Allied and Commonwealth horses, mules and donkeys lost during the Great War.

There has also been a suggestion on the Community Facebook page that we have a mass boat sounding of horns just after the 11am silence finishes on Armistice Day to show the Marina's respect. Watch out for more details.



What 3 Words (what3words.com)

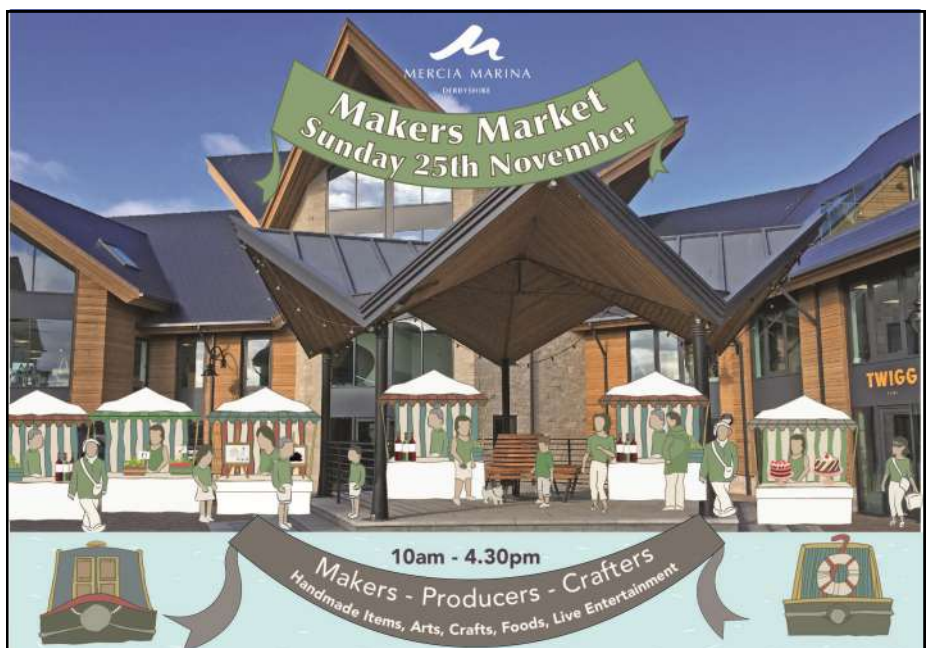
The UK's combination of street names and postcodes generally make finding your way around fairly easy.

But supposing it's the middle of the night, you are moored in the middle of nowhere on the cut, and you need help but you don't quite know your location. A British firm have divided the surface of the earth into 3x3 metre squares and each of these squares can be identified by three random English words. The what3words app is free and by tapping in the three words of your destination your phone or tablet will take you to that specific spot on the map, whether you are boating in a Norwegian fiord or on a remote part of the Shropshire Union Canal.

The emergency services are already using the system in some areas of the country and interest is growing, so check out their website for further info.



Our thanks to
Midland Chenders
for their support with
this newsletter



Merchant Traders



Karim and Tanita Merchant opened their doors onto the Piazza at the end of July. The last three months have been hugely busy but they have held to their original plans and, with the help of Sheron and Tracie, have achieved their first goals. Along the way, they have been having a very good time! They have been most delighted by the welcome from the Marina and the people who have come to the store and there is a real community amongst the new Piazza businesses with them all being independent, family-driven businesses with different offerings to shoppers. Compared to other shopping environments (High Street, Shopping Centres, out-of-town 'villages' for instance), Karim says it is much more relaxed at Mercia – the people seem happier and they spend more time gently browsing instead of popping in and out. They tend to stay upwards of 15 minutes and, if they're there for a personal consultation or having their jewellery cleaned and taking advantage of the complimentary drinks, they can be there for a couple of hours! Which he's very pleased about; he wants each and every person coming to Merchant's

to feel like a VIP, regardless of whether or not they make a purchase or how much they spend. Unexpectedly, says Karim, Merchant's is busier when the weather is bad! That may well be because the Marina's many different stores coupled with the Willow Tree Tea Rooms, The Boardwalk Bar & Dining, the Beetroot Tree and Lotus, give people plenty of options under cover while still offering views across the water and the boats. So a planned trip to the Marina doesn't get cancelled if the sun isn't out! Neil Jordan www.flashjordan.co.uk (FlashJordanJewellery on Facebook) are at Merchant's Jewellers from 10am till 5pm on the last weekend of each month for repairs, designing bespoke jewellery from scratch or recommissioning a jewellery piece. Karim and Tanita have plans for a series of monthly events – private viewings and Merchant's new releases, for instance. When their new website launches, sign up for news and click a 'like' on their Facebook page to be sure you're kept up to date. And they will be launching onsite valuations soon.

For comment and contributions, please contact Jo on 07973 711431 or at jojames46@gmail.com

M.A.C CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

Below are the leisure activities for November. All events are in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms, and generally start at 7pm.



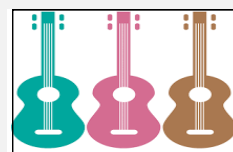
Watercolour Class

Monday 5 November
Monday 12 November
Monday 19 November
Monday 26 November



Craft Group

Wednesday 7 November
Tuesday 13 November
Tuesday 20 November



Ukulele Group

Thursday 1 November
Thursday 8 November
Thursday 15 November
Thursday 22 November
Thursday 29 November

OTHER EVENTS IN OCTOBER

Nature Group

Friday 2 November

Photography Group

Wednesday 14 November

Bingo Night

Wednesday 21 November

Book Club

Tuesday 27 November

Quiz Night

Wednesday 28 November

The Quiz is a team event, so please book in at the Office (who can also give you a team).

Bread Making

Friday 30 November

There are still some tickets for this event at the Office.

If you wish to know more about anything leisure-based please email: events@merciamarina.co.uk



Have you picked up your new Mercia Community Club Card from the Office yet?

New is the offer from Lotus giving a 10% discount off restaurant purchases and 10% off from their takeaway menu via their downloadable phone/tablet app. Ten percent discount is also available at The Beetroot Tree, Black by Design, Merchant's Jewellers, Start & Tremayne and Twigg Home. Bluebird Fine Arts offers Mercians a 5% discount.

There is 10% discount at Willow Tree Tea Rooms, Zing Furniture, Bluewater, White Finn and Elegant Touch & Beauty (over £30 spend). Midland Chandeliers offer a 7.5% discount and The Boardwalk 5% off food purchases.

Off site there are deals at The Dragon, Kinara Indian Restaurant, Willington Chip Shop and the Cottage Garden Florist. A little further afield there are discounts at The OK Diner and Nadee Indian Restaurant.

The full list is available in the office and is available to all annual and 6-month berth holders as well as Lodge owners.



Hail Jane, the All-Conkering Hero

Jane Crafts, from Xantus, is the Mercia Speed Conkers Champion.

The knockout event attracted 15 entries

and amid laughter, groans and cheers and shouts of encouragement or derision from the onlookers, Jane and Jo Smith battled their way to the finals.

It was all-square after the allotted three minutes so a minutes extra time was needed, but with Jo's conker revealing a nasty split down one side, Jane emerged victorious and was presented with the 'conker crown'.

Organiser Roger Filler said,

"Here's hoping we can repeat the event next year and that Jane will return to defend her title".



September Photography Competition Winners

Photographs centering around the Marina's 10th Birthday Party dominated the entries in the September Picture of the Month competition.

Our new resident 'Heron', photographed by Jernina Stanley, 'The Bird of Happiness' by Sue Hicks and 'Bubbles', photographed by Tony Bates, were all worthy joint winners for

last month.

Each winner can choose between a bottle of Prosecco or a box of Chocolates. Entries for October's competition are open now.