



Courtesy of CRT

Winterising your boat

As we approach what is normally the coldest couple of months of the year here's a quick checklist of how to be prepared for whatever Mother Nature has in store for us. This is a list for a complete close down, so you may want to cherry pick, depending on how long you might be leaving your boat for and whether you will be leaving a heater on board etc. And please be careful out there on the pontoons. Appearances can be deceptive and just because there is not a layer of ice or frost on the pontoon boarding, does not mean that it is not extremely slippery. Sand/Gravel is available close to all pontoons. Please help any of your neighbours who might be struggling in the conditions.

- ☐ Check your engine coolant. If it not obvious, then drain and replace your antifreeze mix .
- ☐ Grease exposed linkages.
- ☐ Grease your battery main terminals. Isolate engine battery.
- ☐ Grease stern gland.
- ☐ BATTERIES. Let your landline do its work.
- ☐ Ensure the bilge pump will work automatically or visit the boat to check the bilge water level.
- ☐ Apply a light application of WD40 to vulnerable electrics (and main control panel if it is outside).
- ☐ Grease all door hinges.
- ☐ Drain down hot water heaters and leave drain plugs out.
- ☐ Drain down central heating (or calorifier) or make sure indirect heating water has anti-freeze.
- ☐ If possible, close main water tank stopcock, pump out remaining water and turn pump off.
- ☐ Leave taps open and turn off water pump.
- ☐ Make sure the shower drain pump is run immediately before you leave and there is no water left in pipes.
- ☐ Remove all perishable food and rat treats.
- ☐ Remove plants.
- ☐ Leave all cupboards open for flow of air.
- ☐ Leave fridge door open.
- ☐ Remove as many textiles as possible or store hanging in free air.
- ☐ Turn off gas.
- ☐ Turn off main electric (excluding automatic bilge pump).
- ☐ Try and keep diesel tank as full as possible to prevent water condensation.
- ☐ Install a couple of tube heaters or an oil-filled radiator on thermostatic switches.
- ☐ Talk to your neighbours and swap telephone numbers.



Santa sleighs the crowds

The Mercia Swan proved, yet again, that Santa is alive and well, and living at Mercia Marina (at the weekends anyway). Record crowds jammed the end of the Boardwalk over the four December weekends, patiently queuing to meet the great man and Conker, his trusty elf. After a quick cruise around the marina, each child received a

Christmas gift from the big man and although big queues developed every child was seen by Santa. Captain Paul Hughes said "We had record crowds this year and I think we had as many adults as children, all wanting to meet Santa and have a trip on The Swan. My thanks go to



Mike Coates and Irene Lea for making this year's Grotto such a great success."



Swan Rescue

In last month's *Mercury* we printed the story of a young swan who was found in distress by boater Jack Lilley after swallowing a lot of fishing line and was taken to a local animal sanctuary. The line was extremely thin nylon that had embedded into the top of its beak and as the tissue had almost healed over it, removing the line was going to be difficult. An operation was called for and while the swan was asleep under anaesthetic the bloody saliva in his

beak was removed and also the line which ran from its beak down his oesophagus, along with rotten weed and debris that had become entangled around the line. The vet assesses that the line had been there for weeks or possibly months. The operation was risky as the young swan was so unwell and there were complications as his heart rate was very low and he was unable to breathe on his own. Luckily he pulled through and after intravenous fluids and a day's rest and a course of antibiotics he now cannot stop eating, enjoying lettuce, brown bread and mixed corn in water. He's still not 100 % but is on the mend and is now in a pen with his sister who was also rescued suffering from botulism. They will be released in the spring.

QUIZ NIGHT

The January Quiz is being organised by Jane Wakeham. Its theme is

MEDIA MAYHEM

Wednesday 30 January

Rounds include:
TV advertisements
Cartoons
Radio
Newspapers
Special Music Round

There will also be raffle in support of the marina's wildlife charities.

Sign up in the Office

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



The Yeastie Boy

It was a full house in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms when amateur baker and moorer Peter Horridge presented an evening of baking sour dough bread.

The evening has already inspired many moorers to get baking and Peter is currently looking at a follow-up event in a couple of months, centring on different baking skills.

Wynne on Wine

It was also another packed house when our own oenophile Wynne Jones looked at buying wines for Christmas and the New Year holiday. Mercians enjoyed sampling eight wines that Wynne had selected from Supermarkets and wine retailers under £10 a bottle.

This included comparing two sparkling wines, two whites, reds, and finally two dessert wines. The tasting was accompanied by snacks that complimented the wines.



Christmas Illuminated Boat Parade

This year's boat parade saw seven narrow-boats touring the Marina before a trip to Willington and back. There was plenty of cheery Christmas music, lots of waves to the many onlookers and glasses of mulled wine were spotted in between the lights, tinsel and Christmas trees. More boats took part than last year and if that number doubles next year, it will become an established and welcome addition to the Marina's Christmas Calendar.



M.A.C. CALENDAR FOR JANUARY

All events are held in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms and generally start at 7pm.

Craft Group

2, 8, 15 January

Ukulele Group

3, 10, 17, 24 January

First Aid Friday

25 January

Book Club

29 January

Media Mayhem Quiz

30 January



Christmas Fuddle

The Fuddle was a sell-out as usual - a grand evening with wonderful food to share, a visit from Santa and his Elf 'Conker', music from the Ukulele Group, the Willow Warblers and our own musicians.

Thanks to Helen Deaville for being willing to let us use The Willow Tree Tea Rooms, to those who put the time and effort into the planning of the evening, those who contributed such amazing food and to everyone who came laden with the party spirit.



Our thanks to
Midland Chandlers
for their support with this
newsletter

Photo Competition Winners

The November winners of the Marina Photographic competition were Peter Horridge, Hannah Price and Wendy Johnson.

Each winner can choose between a bottle of Prosecco or a box of Chocolates.



Wendy Johnson



Hannah Price



Peter Horridge

A thank you from Maisie

Over the last year or so, pre-and post-op, a large number of people have helped me - you know who you are - as my pain increased and mobility decreased. Help received from this wonderful community included: carrying stuff to and from the car and laundry room; emptying the Tippy; reeling in my water hose; posting and collecting mail; lifts to appointments, shops, Cherry Tree, etc.; help with pump-out; dog walking and, importantly, with foot care and surgical stockings.

There are five people who have gone

above and beyond, starting with Fiona Winning who sorted decent walking sticks as walking became more difficult; Steve Winning and John Welch (I am forever in your debt) and Colin Capper who has collected my paper five days a week for months on end in all weathers.

Last but not least the late, and much missed, Andy Bowd who not only helped with the water hose but took Chip on the long walks that I couldn't - usually to the pub at Stenson or Willington "for a pint". Not sure how much of the pint Chip got but he was



hailed as a "babe magnet". In memory of Andy, I hope you will accept my gift (in consultation with Robert Neff and Jane Wakeham) of three Luxury Hedgehog

Residences which will be sited at each of the service blocks where our prickly friends have been spotted. It may be too late for them to be occupied this year but maybe next year.

Love from Maisie and Chip (wuff!)

The very best wishes for 2019 to all and may the next twelve months be good to you and yours and to all our friends and neighbours here in the community.

We (Roger and Jo) know we are speaking on behalf of everyone in giving our sincere thanks to all those putting the time and effort into providing such a great place to live - the Partners John and Michael Thornton and Robert Neff; the Office - Tony, Lucy, Jules, Liz, Hannah and Sarah; the Housekeeping Team - Kath, Naomi, Jenny, Karen, Chris, Gill



and Angela; the Grounds Team - Ian, Matt, Rik, Ryan and Dan, Stuart and Pete; all the onsite businesses, with a particular thank you to Helen Deaville who has allowed the Willow Tree Tea Rooms to be used extensively for our many community events. Thanks, too, to all the volunteer First Aiders and Fire Wardens, Kev and Angie Stone for their tireless work with the Community

Bike scheme, Wynne's tecky help, those who have led the various groups and the volunteers who sit on the Mercia Activities' Committee and the Mercia Forum.

So many people to thank but is clear the difference each person can - and does - make to our daily lives. If you have an opportunity to help someone have a bit of a better year, then go ahead and do it!

There were many, many times this happened through 2018 and it was heartwarming to see the care being shown one to another.