

## Every dog has it's day at Mercia



Above: Paul Neal, Sean Vincent, and Louise Davies, helped by Tony Webb, present a cheque to the Greyhound Trust

The inaugural 'Santa Paws' walk last month gave those supporting the event an opportunity to have their photograph taken inside a festive frame with their pedigree chums. Forty Five pounds was raised and a cheque for that amount was presented at the beginning of January to the Hall Green Greyhound Trust who brought along four-year old Beau, from their re-homing kennels at Shenstone to help with the presentation.

The 'Santa Paws' event is a precursor to an even bigger dog event happening this spring at our very own 'Canine Carnival' on Sunday 17 May. More details to follow, but it will be a fun day out for all Mercians and their four-legged friends.

## Flower Arranging Workshop 2



Maxine and Sue show off their creations

Following the success of the Christmas Workshop Chris Noble is holding a second event on Friday, 7 February in The Willow Tree Tea Room from 7pm. This time she is planning to focus on Valentine's/Mothers' Day in February and will be demonstrating an arrangement with seasonal flowers. You should please bring a pair of scissors, a black bin liner, a tea towel and flowers of your choice along with plenty of foliage. Artificial is fine. Further details are on the Community Facebook page to sign up.

WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT

# WE'RE HAVING A MAMMOTH QUIZ

**Willow Tree  
Tea Room,  
Friday 28 February  
at 7pm**

This is in place of the regular monthly quiz and all the proceeds from the evening (entry fee and raffle) will go to MacMillan

Sign your team/yourself up in Marina Office as per usual

Eight rounds of ten questions

Fundraising for

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

## The Great Pumpkin Challenge

A competition for all moorers and lodge owners to grow and show their best pumpkin this Halloween (end of October).

Grow yours in a bag, basket or anything really. Prizes will be awarded in various classes. One entry per boat, lodge or allotment (separate judging classes)

Seeds, compost, starter pot, growing tips all provided

Judging will be at the end of October for weight and appearance

Full details to follow



## Who's who on the Marina Forum

*The Mercia Boaters' and Lodge Owners Forum exists for the frank and honest exchange of views, opinions and wishes between elected representatives and marina management. A Forum that represents you and gets things done.*

### Stuart Willington

(Ibis, Jay, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Moorhen)



Stuart has lived on *Ladybird* at Mercia for 6 years now. At first with his late wife Sue but now it's just Oscar and him. Prior to retirement he was a

training manager for a decontamination company involved with sterile service departments in hospitals throughout the UK and Europe, a hectic lifestyle so retiring on to a narrow boat – he says – was just perfect. He looked around several Marinas but found Mercia to be the best of all of them.

### Nigel Hunt

(Egret, Finch, Grebe, Heron)



Nigel came to Mercia with Jane ten years ago. They had been liveaboards on *MaryAnn* for about ten years before that, mooring at Alve-

cote and then King's Bromley. For the first few years they had their daughters here on their boats as well! Nigel retired from the Fire Service in 2005 after 32 years and while at King's Bromley was working part-time at Streethay. With a thorough background in Caravanning, there's not a lot he doesn't know. As people will know, Nigel – and Jane – are fully involved in Mercia life and Nigel has been the Rep for F, G and H Pontoons for over eight years.

### Maisie Trotman

(Nuthatch, Owl, Peregrine, Quail)



Maisie's first boating experience was a holiday back in 1994 and she says she knew immediately she was a liveaboard in waiting!

She brought *Global Spirit* to Mercia at the end of her inaugural 2008 summer cruise. She's always single handed on her extended summer expeditions and has been of significant help to Mercia boaters new to cruising. She became the Rep for N,O,P and Q in December, previously being the Rep for several years but stood down while her hip was sorted.

### Kerrie Fletcher

(Albatross, Avocet, Blackbird, Bullfinch, Zebra Dove)



With her husband Dave (and their two dogs Blue and Willow) Kerrie has been a residential moorer on Avocet on *British Maid* since Octo-

ber 2016. Before that they were leisure moorers for 4 years on their 32ft Springer. When they bought her, their combined boating experience was a couple of holidays decades before, so it was a steep learning curve! Kerrie works full time for Swadlincote-based charity South Derbyshire CVS (Community Voluntary Support) but she can be contacted by e mail and is around in the evenings or weekends. Dave is around most of the time and happy to pass on any messages.

## February Calendar of Events

All events are at The Willow Tree Tea Room, starting at 7pm, unless otherwise stated.

### Music Group

Tuesday 4 February

### Watercolour Group

Monday 3 February  
Monday 10 February  
Monday 17 February  
Monday 24 February

### Craft Group

Wednesday 5 February  
Tuesday 11 February  
Tuesday 18 February

### Ukulele Group

Thursday 6 February  
Thursday 13 February  
Thursday 20 February  
Thursday 27 February

### Book Club

Tuesday 25 February

### OTHER FEBRUARY EVENTS

#### Flower Arranging Workshop

Saturday 7 February

#### Beetle Drive

Wednesday 12 February

#### Bingo Night

Wednesday 19 February

#### MacMillan Mammoth Quiz

Friday 28 February

*Dates and arrangements can change and new events do get added. Keep in the know by checking the Marina Community Facebook page or ask friends/neighbours for updates*

## New Marina offer at Molson Coors

All Mercians who have a Mercia Card can now take advantage of the great deals available on beers, wines and spirits at the Molson Coors Brewery Shop in Burton upon Trent. Offers vary throughout the year but discounts of up to 50% are often available. Over 18s only and all purchases must be for personal use only.

MOLSON Coors

### STAFF SHOP



The shop is located on Wetmore Road, DE14 1SP, and situated to the right of the Riviera Travel office. Car parking is available on-site.

### Opening Hours

Monday	8am-12pm
Tuesday	8am-12pm
Wednesday	11am-3pm
Thursday	11am-3pm
Friday	11am-3pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed





Mercia Marina c2008

## 50 Years On The Cut

Roger was born in Kent and his family still live there. Barbara was born in California but grew up in Maryland. In the 1970's they met in London where she was working in psychology research and he for the BBC. They lived in Norwich and London before moving to the US in 1981. Barbara was not keen to leave the UK at the time but Roger wanted to experience a classless culture which has "All men are created equal" in its Bill of Rights. He is a US resident but remains forever a Brit. He retired in 2004. They live in Phoenix but escape to cooler climes in summer, including Mercia.

I first got interested in the canals many moons ago in the mid-sixties. I had a stressful first job at the BBC in London and would blow off steam by walking the Regent's canal for hours. I became fascinated by the narrow boats and particularly the occasional working boat that chugged past. Old Bolinders and the like still give me a frisson. I soon discovered the locks at Hanwell (Camden was a seedy area in those days, not the trendy place it is today). The thought of traveling to faraway places by water seemed wildly romantic and still does 50 years later, though the places don't seem quite so far away.

My first forays onto the water were on old converted 70' work boats packed with rowdy drunken friends. I still have an old log book which has columns for miles traveled, locks and pints quaffed. Once, we navigated the south Stratford and got stuck under a bridge where workmen had dumped tons of bricks in the cut. Eventually, they towed us over the rubble with a dump truck. I relayed the story to the manager at Willow Wren and he said "What do you expect, trying to navigate a ditch!"

For the next 15 years or so I hired boats and then used the BBC Club's boat *Alexandra Palace*. I helped commission their next boat, *Savoy Hill*, which was still around until recently when it was replaced by a new boat of the same name. Then in 1981 I left the BBC and we bummed around the world for a year before ending up in Arizona. Truly, the desert years had begun. No boats, no water. I was bereft. I consoled myself by designing my dream narrowboat in my spare time.

I retired in 2004 and took my plans to 3 builders – Stoke-on-Trent, Piper and a loner who told me to get a quote and drawings from a builder and he would build it for 25% less. Such ethics! Needless to say, the loner was a loser and I selected Piper. Simon Piper is quite a character. He was able to adapt my plan to something buildable and in 2007 *Basil*

*the King* was launched. Basil was my American wife's favourite cat and he thought of himself as the King of the household, so the name was my attempt to win Barb over to the watery life. . Phoenix is hell in the summer and I had done my fair share of sweat labour, so for ten years we decamped to England for three months each summer and cruised the waterways aboard *Basil Boat*. Our first mooring was at Ventnor Farm marina which is in a fine rural setting but totally unsuitable for us because of lack of transport, shops or any nearby civilization. In 2008 I saw an ad for the new Mercia Marina and we came to have a look. Mercia was just a muddy construction site but Robert Neff inspired us with his vision of the future. We liked and trusted him immediately and booked the last end spot.

(Part Two next month)



Barbara Carter on board 'Basil The King' celebrating Independence Day



## December Photography Winners

Christmas scenes featured in many of last month's entries and the three winners were Carl Munday, Harrison (Cork Lodge) and Jemma Bett.

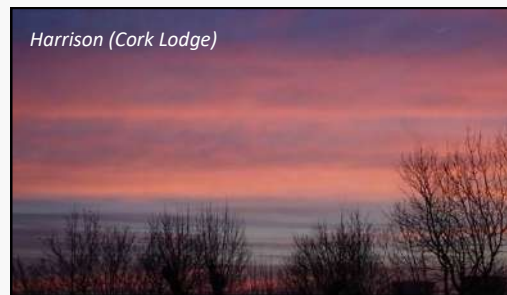
All monthly winners receive either a bottle of Prosecco or box of chocolates from the Marina Office. Submit your February entries to: [tony@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:tony@merciamarina.co.uk)



Jemma Bett



Carl Munday



Harrison (Cork Lodge)

## Streethay – 10 Months' On

Streethay Engineering has now been at Mercia for just on ten months and are pleased to wish everyone a Happy New Year with particularly good wishes to all customers – old and new – both at Mercia and at Streethay's main yard. Tina says they've enjoyed getting to know the community here at Mercia and thanks everyone for their welcome to all the Streethay staff as they've been work



ing in and around the marina. There are two recent additions to the Mercia team- Trevor from Scotland and Matt from Findern. It is a truly multinational team with a large array of skills between them.

Over the last ten months, the Mercia base has settled down and adapted to the demand for different types of work. Mercia and Streethay have, together, made changes to the Dry Dock so that it can be utilised all year round – the lighting has been upgraded with LED lighting, heaters have gone in and a transparent curtain now provides shelter from the weather. But, mindful of the nesting birds which return each spring, a gap has been left at the top of the curtaining to give them unrestricted access.

