

**A Very Happy New Year  
to all Mercians**



**A**s 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 very 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.

## Winterising your boat

- ☐ Check your engine coolant. If it not obvious, then drain and replace your antifreeze mix .
- ☐ Grease exposed linkages.
- ☐ Grease battery main terminals. Isolate engine battery.
- ☐ Grease stern gland.
- ☐ Batteries. Let you landline do it's 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.
- ☐ Remove all perishable food and rat treats.
- ☐ Remove plants.
- ☐ Leave all cupboards open for flow of air.
- ☐ Leave fridge door open.
- ☐ Remove as much textile 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 in case of a problem.



## Post, Parcels and Christmas and New Year Hours

**P**lease continue to collect your post and parcels promptly – it's amazing how quickly the space fills up! And remember the Christmas/New Year changes to the Office hours (see the panel on the back page).

## A Big Round of Applause!

**N**ow is a good time for us to give our very sincere thanks to all those who keep the Marina running, keep it so clean and beautiful and look after it all through the day (and sometimes into the night!).



We all benefit hugely from their commitment, their attention to detail and their unfailing cheerfulness and good humour. So a big round of applause to the

Housekeeping Team: Kath, Naomi, Jenny, Angela, Karen, Gill, Chris, Ben, Rosie and Hannah.

Another to the Grounds' Team: Ian, Matt, Dan, Rik, James and of course Stuart.

And a third round of applause to the Office/Reception Team: Robert, Tony, Lucy, Jules, Sylvia and Chris.

Thanks, too, to Helen Deaville who has given us her Willow Tree Tea Rooms for community events all through the year.

## Santa Paws

**O**ur first Santa Paws walk in December saw 17 dogs, adorned in various costumes, and accompanied by their

owners, braving the windy conditions, before returning to the Bandstand where mulled wine and other drinks were served.



Finally every dog had the opportunity to show off, either with or without their owners, as they were photographed in a special Christmas frame by our very own Ian Carroll. Looks like this might become a Mercian Christmas tradition.



## Matt's Final Figure

**M**any Mercians supported Matt Franklin's epic Charity Bike Ride from Land's End to John O' Groats in September in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). With all the money now in Matt has been able to donate a staggering £3,195 and recently received this from the charity

## Wynne on Wine

**W**ynne enjoyed himself and, it seems, so did the two dozen wine



lovers who joined him for an evening of tasting wines with a difference. Ten wines – most of which were new to the tasters – were

presented with a mini 10-course tasting menu where the food was selected to complement the wines (the two Jo's – Smith and James – wafting to and fro).



**T**he Book Club gives their money each month to Book Aid International and we've just heard the 1,000,000<sup>th</sup> book of 2019 has now left the warehouse en route to Ghana.

Jo Smith says: "Book Club members can't imagine a life without books and all the joy and opportunity to learn that books bring us. That's why we decided to donate our monthly fees to this charity".

## The Quiz of Quizzes

**J**ane Wakeham will be your quizmaster for the January New Year Quiz in the



Willow Tree on Wednesday 29 January, starting at 7pm.

Jane is promising a format based around TV quiz shows,

old and current. Sign up in the Marina Office.



Our thanks to Midland Charters for their support with this newsletter



## Mercia Christmas Fuddle

It was a night of fun and games at this year's Fuddle.

After a visit from Santa, who joined the party and stayed for a bite to eat, it was time for some party games.

And Santa was on form, for he won the opening game, but two other tables won the consecutive games 'Head Artist' and 'Wearable Nautical Anagrams'. The evening concluded with dancing.



# That Was Our Year That Was

2019 has been an interesting and busy year for the Marina and all the people who 'belong' to it. The residential community is now some 500 and, when those who come on site every day for work together with regularly visiting moorers and holiday lodge guests are added, the daily total must climb to nearer 1,000.

## A spectrum of happenings

It's not surprising, then, that there has been the whole spectrum of happenings and events over the last twelve months. We've lost good friends and neighbours who always be missed and there are moorers who have left the Marina or given up boating. There have been good times and sad times, sunshine and showers and many opportunities to celebrate and enjoy each other's company at community events. Group activities have flourished, there have been expeditions and outings, people to support as they undertook challenges for charities and days spent at a lake waiting for a fish to take the bait!

Throughout it all, the *Mercia Mercury* has tried to give a faithful and fair record – particularly for those who may live away (far, far away in some cases!) but who remain committed to the Marina and want to be part of its life. We've picked out some highlights from the year from the last twelve Mercia Mercurys.

## The year's highlights

Do you remember the Canalside Casino at the start of the year with the three resplendent croupiers? Or Tony Haslam spending a week walking the entire length of the Trent & Mersey to raise money for Prostate Cancer Research?



By April, ducks were nesting wherever they could find a safe billet and 'Duckling Watch' continues to this day! Streethay Engineering arrived on site and rapidly became part of the fabric of the place as they responded to boaters' needs.

Then the Park, with its wonderful trees, took shape and Alistair Farson presented us with carved dragons, bridges and narrowboats. The Marina was given – for the ninth year running – a Gold Conservation Award from David Bellamy (a conservation champion who will be sorely missed).

Pete Horridge taught us how to make sourdough (and won several converts who now do all their own baking) and we had The Biggest Pub Quiz evening. There were the amazing 60s, 70s and Halloween nights, the rapid development of Marina walking – getting fit and losing kilos while those involved covered the kilometres.

Matt Franklin rode from one end of Britain to the other and we helped him raise over £3,000 for Great Ormond Street.

Roger ran the Conker Championships and an 'Ascot by the Water' night. Sally Pepper presented her Radio Derby morning show in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms whilst sending her Heidi off on the Mercia Swan.

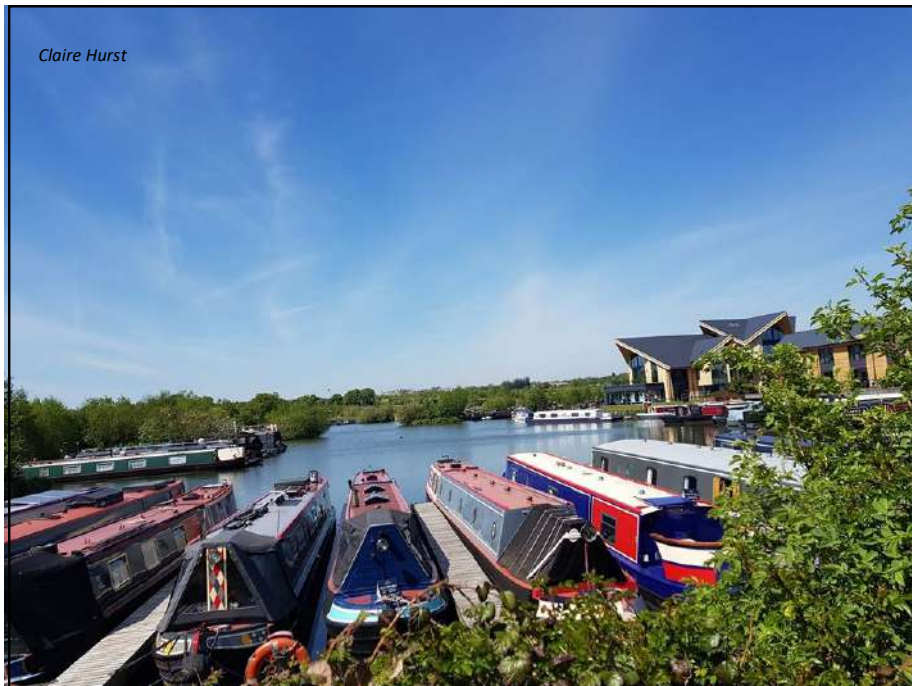
The Mercia Offices were refurbished, New & Used moved to a superb floating office moored on the pontoon. The Marina celebrated Easter Weekend, Halloween and Bonfire Night with an End of Season Party alongside strEAT Food stalls, character actors, bubble blowers and stilt walkers.

We look forward into 2020 and all that that may bring. A very Happy New Year to all.





Claire Hurst



Pete Horridge



Fran Buxey



## November Photography Winners

Autumnal scenes featured in many of last month's entries and the three winners were Claire Hurst, Pete Horridge and Fran Buxey

All monthly winners receive either a bottle of Prosecco or box of chocolates from the Marina Office.

If you have a photograph of the Marina you think is worthy of entry then send a copy to [tony@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:tony@merciamarina.co.uk) and you might see it on the back page of the *Mercury* next month.

It will be interesting to see your winter photographs so get snapping.

## January Calendar of Events

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

### Music Group

Tuesday 7 January

### Watercolour Group

Monday 6 January

Monday 13 January

Monday 24 January

### Craft Group

Wednesday 8 January

Tuesday 14 January

Tuesday 21 January

### Ukulele Group

Thursday 2 January

Thursday 9 January

Thursday 16 January

Thursday 23 January

Thursday 30 January

### Book Club

Tuesday 25 January

### OTHER JANUARY EVENTS

#### First Aid Meeting

Friday 3 January

#### Bingo Night

Wednesday 15 January

#### The Quiz Of Quizzes

Wednesday 26 January

*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*

### Marina Office Opening Times over Christmas/New Year

24 December 9am –2pm

**Closed 25 & 26 December**

27-30 December Normal times

31 December 9am –2pm

**Closed 1 January**

2 January 9am-5.30pm

For comment and contributions, please contact

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