

The Marina's email from two weeks ago was a helpful 'report' on how the current situation translates into Mercia and its activities in the context of the Government's easing of the lockdown rules. The email's main points are summarised here as a reminder or, if things continue to hold steady or indeed progress a little more, to provide a context for that new situation.

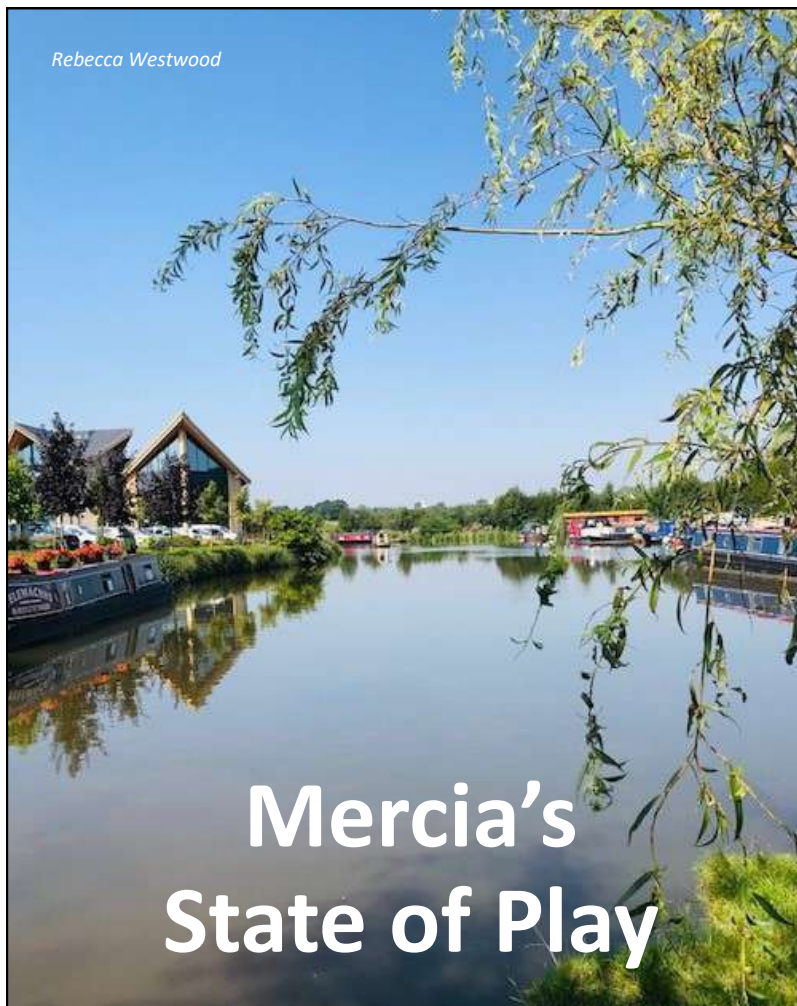
Leisure boaters and Holiday Lodge owners are now able to return on day visits to check their boats or lodges and have 'catch-up' conversations with friends and neighbours whilst maintaining all the appropriate social distancing and protective measures.

Boats can now go cruising but should avoid locks wherever possible and must return to their home mooring the same day and not stay out overnight.

Still Waters and The Beetroot Tree have remained open throughout the lockdown period thanks to the commitment from Grahame, Chrissy, Sandra, Denise, Roy, Heg, Rich, Jeanette and Andy. Between them they have managed to supply moorers and lodge owners under difficult circumstances.

Horticulture 4 – as a garden/plants centre – has been able to reopen with appropriate social distancing and protective measures in place. Alina and Dale look forward to welcoming you. The other businesses – **Black by Design**, **Twigg Home** and **Midland Chandlers** – have been busy trading through their

Rebecca Westwood



Mercia's State of Play

online presence and **New & Used Boats** are now open for pre-booked viewings. **Merchant's Jewellers** has a new website which has just gone online. We hope all these shops will be opening their doors early June.

Our cafes and restaurants will be hoping to reopen before too long after that but, in the meantime, Lotus is now offering takeaway meals alongside the Beetroot Tree's bacon cobs and hot drinks and The Boardwalk Bar & Dining is working out how to make best use of the outdoor space when they fully reopen. If the Government gives the green light for the next phase, it is hoped the

Holiday Lodges will be able to welcome guests from the 4 July though there will be a 3-day rest period between bookings to everyone's safety.

The public toilets and facilities' blocks' show-ers and toilets (excepting block 1) remain closed both to protect the Housekeeping Team and the community. The laundries have remained open throughout but anyone using them or the few who have to use the toilets and showers in block 1 must exercise extreme caution and sanitise rigorously. The virus is here on the marina, and of those affected, so far, some have suffered very badly. There is, as yet, no date for reopening all the facilities.

These weeks have provided unexpected benefits though. The weather – largely dry with some lovely sunny periods – has led to an excellent Spring and the hard work of the Grounds and Maintenance teams mean the grounds are looking beautiful. The lack of traffic (both water and road) and most people just walking quietly has encouraged wildlife of all sorts.

To stay more up to date on the marina, its shops and lodges, do check in regularly to Mercia Marina's Facebook page www.facebook.com/merciamarina.

Do remember to be kind, be patient, be tolerant and be helpful. We hope Mercia's extended family are keeping well. This will have been one of the most difficult journeys any of us have ever been on, but a return to some kind of normality is on the horizon.

Our thanks to Midland
Chandlers for their support
with this newsletter



What we did in Lockdown

Dave Gilman & Boat Fettleing



There is ALWAYS a job waiting on a boat, so I knew I was never going to be short of things to do when lockdown started. In fact I've chatted to so many people (social distancing of course!) who have told me they have finally got round to doing those fiddly little jobs that they would never have gotten round to before.

Somehow, when you have time, and are not trying to cram it into a day off whilst working, jobs can actually become a joy, and they have given me a semblance of order to my days. One saving grace - (prompted by a 'neighbour'!) I actually went out just before lockdown and bought EVERYTHING I thought I would need. One or two items had to be found online and understandably, took ages to arrive, but I had most of the bits I needed before everything shut.

By the end of Day One I had ripped out the entire bulkhead on my wide beam. I was full of vigour and enthusiasm. A whole bedroom - walls, doors and all. I'd had an idea in my head for about a year and after being introduced to 'Pinterest' (by same neighbour!) there was nothing to hold me back.

The next job was to tidy up! Piles of wood on the floor and furniture cluttering up my now, rather large, space. I could do a morning Joe Wicks workout in this new space but strangely my thought was overtaken at 9am every day by a bacon butty!

I painted the old furniture which now looks as good as new, and used an old door, cut in to rounds, to make a new breakfast bar. I discovered the world of podcasts (yes... same neighbour!) and whiled away the painting hours with Peter Crouch and Dan Snow as I transformed every wall (oh and the ceilings as well!).

When the weather turned good I stepped out on the roof, scrubbed and sanded, touching up the rust and repainting the cream colour. As usual

though, as boaters well know, I soon spotted another pressing job. Rust on my front locker. An hour later I was crouching inside, making sure the rust on the underside of the hinges wouldn't compromise my water worthiness in fifteen years' time.

I was in danger of ending up repainting the engine bay at one stage but was saved by the window frames which looked shabby once my new curtains went up....

A month has gone by and last night I was sitting on the sofa, watching the 'Repair Shop' (one of my favourite programmes) when my water pump started up intermittently. With all the taps checked, and no shower on, was there a leak? Boats have a nasty habit of providing you with jobs just when you think you have finished everything. Trouble is, if truth be known, I'm actually knackered!

John Lousvet & Baking



Right at the beginning let me say thank you to my wife Jo for her help and assistance in getting me started. She has been baking sourdough and

yeast bread since Peter Horridge's sourdough bread night in the dim and distance days before Lockdown. That is my life and marriage protected!

I started baking bread as I felt guilty that Jo was always doing it but also because the spares from the radio control narrowboat that I had scatchbuilt were awaiting delivery and I was bored. I really enjoyed doing this following a recipe that I found on the internet. Of course being a man, I had to do it bigger and better so I changed it a bit and did two loaves at once - luckily it worked.

The ingredients we already had in stock as Jo has baked all our bread for the last 18 months and, with the help of Chrissy and Graeme, we had a catering size bag of bread flour. The yeast came from The Beetroot Tree so no great difficulty in getting the makings. The picture is of my first batch.

I have been very pleased with the

outcome, having so far baked two separate lots of two 800gm loaves. I do intend to continue baking yeast bread and want to try my hand at French sticks. I would say that this is a shared



interest with Jo as, although she enjoys making sourdough

and Artisan breads, we can complement each other and both enjoy bread in any form. I will probably continue as a "bake it to eat it" straightforward loaf person. If anyone wants to try their hand at this, e-mail me on lousvetforum@gmail.com and I will send the recipe and method.

Martin Jordan & Bird Census



What to do during Lockdown? Full steam ahead with the Low Carb diet, reading classic books/videos

but most importantly using the Lockdown to study the variety of birdlife at Mercia Marina on our daily exercise walk.

The Derbyshire Ornithological Society and the Derbyshire Birders' Facebook page both encouraged their members to do a Lockdown List either in their own gardens or on their daily exercise walk. Without leaving the marina it was more than possible to do this and to try to photograph as many of the species as possible.

In the early days of Lockdown I looked at the species close to the boat and then expanded to the whole marina as we felt safe to do so.

With Spring approaching the initial list was added to quickly by the arrival of summer visitors. Chiffchaff first followed by Blackcaps, Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat. A week later Swallows appeared followed by Swifts (no House Martins yet though).

At the time of writing, the number of species stood at 56. The main woodland area behind the lodges are not viewable so species such as Goldcrest,

Nuthatch and Tree Creeper were not seen (though we know they're there). Within the manicured area of the marina common garden birds thrive, whereas on the boundaries of the site the less common warbler were seen. The stars of the show were four Waxwings that were seen just as Lockdown came into place, the Cuckoo and the Peregrine falcon, the latter seen with prey over the site.

Without Lockdown I wouldn't have known what a large range of birds we have here at Mercia and how difficult it is to get decent photos of the warblers once the trees come into full leaf !

Paul & Mags Hughes & Tai Chi Qigong



Mags and I had both seen John Collinson from time to time practising his T'ai Chi

movements on his finger mooring overlooking the water (18 Form Tai Chi Qigong).

It's lovely to watch, relaxing even to a spectator, so we were enthusiastic to say the least, when he invited us to learn a sequence of exercises under his tuition. The beautiful weather, warm and still with a cloudless blue sky seemed a further inducement, if we had needed one.

Day 1 saw us spaced alongside our boat ready to begin. A warm up was followed by a demonstration by John who took us through the first six (of 18) movements of gentle flowing exercises with names like 'rainbow dance', 'separating the clouds' and 'rowing a boat', each designed to balance, strengthen and aid various parts of the anatomy. These movements have come down to us from ancient traditions in Chinese culture but have been shown by modern scientific investigation to have positive effects on the body and mind of modern adherents to the discipline. We found it immediately relaxing and calming, with added benefits the following morning for both of us with our ageing and stiffening backs, knees and shoulders.

Day 2 added further movements, 'waving hands in the clouds', 'scooping the sea' and 'moving like waves' amongst them. John demonstrated the full sequence so that we could see

where we were heading.

A further aid to subsequent practice was a You Tube video of Master Wing Cheung demonstrating the complete set. His serene and compelling presence, in a natural background of trees and greenery and open air with relaxing music, was an irresistible invitation to join him. www.taichi18.com

Sue Jordan Photography



I have been interested in photography since I was 11. My first camera was a little second-hand Kodak Brownie and my very first photo was

of my Mother (I still have it). Dad was a very keen photographer so I have him to thank for my hobby !

When digital cameras were developed it opened up a whole new world - Dad said he was born too early!

I bought a Canon 450D with no idea how to use it so it stayed on auto setting for 10 years! When we came to Mercia Marina I joined the Camera Club and thanks to Wynne and Ian I now know the settingsHurray!

Last year Martin gave me a Canon 77D for my 70th birthday. Wanting to learn more, I joined a free online class (A Year With My Camera) which has taken me to the next level. Macro photography is definitely is my favourite shooting mode, especially nature, flowers, grasses, fungi, plus weird and wonderful objects.

As Lockdown came into force in March, Martin and I started to go out with our cameras on our daily exercise. We have been blessed with beautiful spring weather recently - not much rain and wind which can be tricky taking macro photos. I have not had any success with insects yet but I will keep trying and perhaps get a few tips from Ian! There are many other things which make great macro shots - like ropes, zips and pencil nibs - we just have to look for textures, form, shape, different angles and play with focus. I'm still learning all the time; it can be hugely frustrating but the rewards are definitely greater. At the time of writing, I have taken more than 300 photographs around the marina with many more to come!



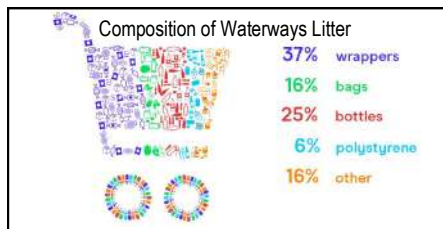
Walking to Work - Wynne Jones

I work for an international software company providing cloud-based business document process automation systems, so the internet is my workspace and I can work anywhere there is an internet connection. The UK office is in Derby, which is still closed, so for the last eight weeks I have replaced the daily 20-minute crawl to work in the car with a 'walk to work', joining the cohorts of walkers on their morning exercise or dog walk.

After breakfast and copious mugs of coffee, the first big decision is to decide which way to walk round. The Clockwise Route with the lodges' view, followed by the short straight to the pedestrian gate, across narrow bridge to the front with the empty closed offices, perhaps catching signs of life as The Beetroot Tree opens up (well done Heg!), past the closed Willow Tree Tea Rooms, down the dip adjacent to the wide beams and back up through the main gate (pedestrian gate not the vehicular entrance) and the long road to the back of the Marina and near the lakeside, a winding road past facility block 2 to 'Goose Green' (as Jo and I call it) with the entrance to the dog walking field and the weather station, back round past the healthy-looking young wild flower meadow and linear orchard, curve round by the entrance of the long term car and tractor park, past the neighbouring lodges and catch sight of our boat before arriving back. Or do I go Anticlockwise? It's a mile either way unless I detour up around the lake to see how the oystercatchers are doing.

It is a wonderful time of year with the fresh greenery and signs of spring and the increasing wildlife activity, and each day brings something different to see.

Boats are now able to move out onto the Trent & Mersey albeit under conditions. Many boats will continue to stay on their Marina mooring where the overwhelming majority have been since Autumn last year. There are, therefore, several hundred boats with either their residential or leisure owners doing a lot of daily living – particularly so with the current restrictions on the use of the Facilities' Blocks. And with the weather warming up and the wildlife burgeoning, it's a good time to think about how we are caring for the environment. More than that, a particular part of our environment - the Marina's central, critical and most attractive feature – its water. When you clean, wash and polish your boat; when you wash yourself, your dishes, your laundry; when you clean the surfaces, oven, bathroom and general areas in the boat, are you strict about the products you use? Products used on boat hulls and decks often contain mi-



Our Green Responsibilities

croplastics, chlorine, ammonia, potassium hydroxide and solvents – all are potentially harmful. Many detergents used in washing machines and dishwashers (some boats do have them) still contain phosphates which can lead to nutrient enrichment and so algal blooms and, alongside, oxygen depletion. Other products, such as degreasers, can dry natural oils which are important for the fish and the chemicals in cleaning products can disrupt the reproductive

cycles of our aquatic life.

The simplest way to have a green (or greener) lifestyle is to choose more environmentally sensitive products and minimise the amount of soaps and detergents used in onboards sinks, showers and washing machines.

Use fresh water and elbow grease when washing your boat! Don't throw food rubbish into the water, nor cigarette butts, cat litter, dog or cat faeces. Don't overfill your diesel tank in the summer and certainly don't fill from a can.

All of the above has been said before and you will – or should – be very aware of our environmental responsibilities. But it never does any harm to run through things again, especially when the marina is quiet, the boats aren't moving a great deal so the water is less disturbed and not so oxygenated.

It then does become very evident where there has been thoughtless or downright careless behaviour.

Charity Bed Push



Steve Kirk (Kirky) is planning a Charity Bed Push from Burton Hospital to the Royal Derby Hospital (well over 10 miles whichever route he takes!). The money raised will be split 50/50 between the NHS and The Poppy Appeal. It will happen shortly after the current restrictions are lifted. Many more details will follow when it looks like a date could be set.

Streethay are back

Streethay Engineering at Mercia Marina are now back at work, complying with the Government guidelines on Social Distancing, and are happy to carry



out any jobs which may need doing on your boat including servicing, repairs or improvements. They still have a few spaces left for blacking this season, but hurry, they are going fast! If you are unable to come to the Marina let them know if you would like them to



VE Day Socially-Distanced Afternoon Tea with Jane Crafts and Jo Smith

check your boat over. They will be happy to do so.

The launch of their new Loyalty Scheme has been hampered a little by the Coronavirus outbreak but they will be publishing the details very soon. In the meantime you are welcome to register your interest now. Phone or email with your contact details. See below. Streethay Wharf at Lichfield are also open for business as usual. We hope you all stay safe and well and look forward to seeing you in the near future. Mail: mercia.streethaywharf@gmail.com or phone 01293 707383.



You **must** keep to the site speed limit. Drivers of vehicles that are ignoring this will be cautioned and you can be refused permission to bring your vehicle on site.