

*A Discussion Piece from
Peter Bentley-Hicks*

It may be a strange time of year to be discussing this but as you will be aware, plans to phase out the sale of coal and wet wood for domestic burning and encouraging the use of cleaner fuels in the home were confirmed by the government on 21 February this year. Maybe this is a moment to take stock and consider whether you really need a stove to heat your boat. Maybe is there a more environmentally-friendly, cleaner and more efficient way to do it?

Diesel Central Heating:

I live on a 19.8m x 3.7m widebeam with 94 cubic meters of living space (or 65ft x 12ft and 4,025 cubic feet in old money!). The boat has a fully pressurised central heating system throughout the accommodation. It has neither a coal/wood nor diesel stove - all heating and hot water being generated by a Webasto boiler and a 1 kw fan heater set in the rear steps of the galley. Believe it or not, we can maintain a temperature of 25C even in the coldest of winters with the advantage of a gallon of hot water on tap. In 2018/19 our annual diesel heating bill was £607.00 (for 844 litres of diesel) which breaks down to £1.60 a day. You do of course have to remember to service the Webasto (usually each summer at around £200) for this to function efficiently.



Heating Your Boat



The proposed red diesel changes would increase these costs but on the government website, proposed revisions to the 2020 Finance Bill include the statement that where craft have one tank for propulsion and heating the government will explore options that prevent individuals from having to pay a higher rate of duty on their heating use than they would otherwise have to pay.

The upsides of not having a stove: more living space in the saloon, no coal/wood smoke or dust in the cabin, no carbon monoxide fumes in the cabin, no need to carry or store coal and/or wood on the boat or on the roof, no danger of boat fire due to hot embers.

Electric Heating:

What if your boat doesn't have a central heating system and the stove and a gas hot water heater are it? Having spoken to a number of boaters, £30 a week on smokeless coal, logs and kindling is a pretty average spend over a 30-week autumn/winter period, making a total spend of £900, not counting any extra if summer evenings get cold.

If you are a resident on the marina with access to a constant 240V 3Kw supply on the pontoons at a cost of 16p per Kw/hr,

you might want to consider electric heating. A modern hot/cool air circulating fan with temperature control could warm your cabin up quickly and keep it a constant temperature.

For example, one of the new Dyson units at full power uses 2Kw/hour, automatically reducing when the living space is up to temperature. You can set a timer for the heat to go off when you go to bed and switch back on a couple of hours before you get up.

Looking at an average of 1Kw/hr power usage during the day, from say 0600hr to 2200hrs (16 hours per day), that would equate to a cost of £2.56 per day. Over a 30-week autumn/winter period, assuming 7 days a week usage, this would cost £537.60. Not only cheaper than solid fuel but instant and considerably cleaner.

This is just to illustrate that living without a coal/wood stove doesn't have



to be a hardship and that there may actually be benefits. You could be living with cleaner air and a warm boat for less than you currently pay. Worth thinking about!

Fifty years ago, burning coal and wood was pretty much the only option but I just wanted to point out that now we have choices that could not only benefit us financially but also clean up the atmosphere and offer huge health benefits for those people with asthma or other lung conditions affected by the smoke and sulphur hanging in the air over the winter months. Collectively 500-600 bags of coal are burnt on the Marina during the winter months.

Maybe it's time to think about cleaning up our act?



Do you remember VISA's remarkably prescient 2019 Christmas

Advertisement "Where You Shop Matters"? Made with local shopkeepers and business owners it's worth a rewatch on *YouTube*.

For the last four months we all have relied heavily on our local shops and businesses to keep us going and now is a good time to return the favour! We are blessed in the number of high quality shops and businesses we can visit or call on for regular deliveries. Furthermore, as members of the Mercia Community, we can get a Mercia Marina Club Card from the Office which gives us a range of benefits and discounts. There is a leaflet in the Office which gives all the details but do bear in mind that the offers may change or can be withdrawn without notice. Please check with the provider if you want to use your card. Our local businesses are looking forward to seeing us all again so have a read through of all the businesses and eateries – some who have made a particular point of extending the hand of welcome to you. They have worked hard to make sure you can visit, shop or stay and eat whilst remaining safe and socially distanced. Those marked with an asterisk are part of the Club Card Scheme and many have already been confirming their willingness to continue their generosity to the Mercia community.

Midland Changers*

All at Midland Changers would like to extend a warm welcome to all our returning customers and to any new ones that have found their way to us. Please note we are currently on shorter opening hours due to cleaning and logistical issues: Monday to Saturday 10am to 12 noon and 1-4pm. Closed on Sundays. www.midlandchangers.co.uk

Dogs and Cats Boarding, Stenson*

We extend a warm welcome to new and returning customers and their pets and please note that we do offer a collection and delivery service. catswhiskersderby.co.uk



Let's keep it local

Garden Florist Willington*

This well-established florist in the centre of Willington stocks fresh flowers for weddings and funerals along with plants, balloons, teddies, giftware, locally made jewellery and candles. Delivery or collections available Mon-Sat. www.cottagegarden-florist.co.uk

All Wills and Trusts*

A 25% discount (in addition to the usual 10% Mercia discount) to boaters is on offer for the duration of the Covid19 outbreak – a substantial help to the community in these difficult times. www.allwillsandtrusts.co.uk

Merchants Jewellers*

A wonderful jewellers boasting tasteful jewellery and watches in a relaxed setting. Watch and Jewellery repairs, bespoke jewellery design. Quality information and service from a quality experience! And now you can buy online and still get the 10% discount by using the code 'MMCC10'. www.merchantsjewellers.com

OK Diner

We hope to welcome back old friends and make new ones as we welcome you to our classic 50s Diner. www.okdiners.com

Mercia Marina*

Don't forget the benefits available from the Marina for both the Dry Dock facility and the Pump Out.

Not on the Marina but only just down the road, don't forget:

The Dragon* in Willington, **The Nadee Restaurant*** and **The Mad Hatter's Tea Room** in Findern as well as **Bee's Tea Room** on the Lower Green, **The Water's Edge Indian Restaurant** in Willington if you're after a meal or a delightful take-home treat. For other shopping and supplies, don't forget that both villages of Willington and Findern have their Post Offices and a good array of other general purpose stores.

Fancy a bit of a browse around clothes or things for the home or garden? Look no further than: **Blue Water***, **Zing Furniture***, **White Finn***, **Black by Design***, **Bluebird Fine Art***, **Start & Tremayne***, **Twigg Home*** or **The Horticulture***.

Yes, they are all on the Marina so there plenty of opportunity to explore and plan!

Slightly further afield but regular visitors to the Marina bringing the ordered provisions are **Torgate Farm** (Meat, Eggs, Flour, Cheese and much else besides!), the **Greedy Pig** in Repton, **Field Supplies** (Fruit and Vegetables and much else besides!) and now **Stewart Bailey** the Fish Man. Or go a little way down the A38 to visit **Robinson's Drive Through** at the Adventure Farm.





Men United 2 versus Prostate Cancer

Tony Haslam writes: As we all know, a nasty little virus has been holding up our planned sponsored walk over these last few months but, hopefully, we will be getting back to nor-

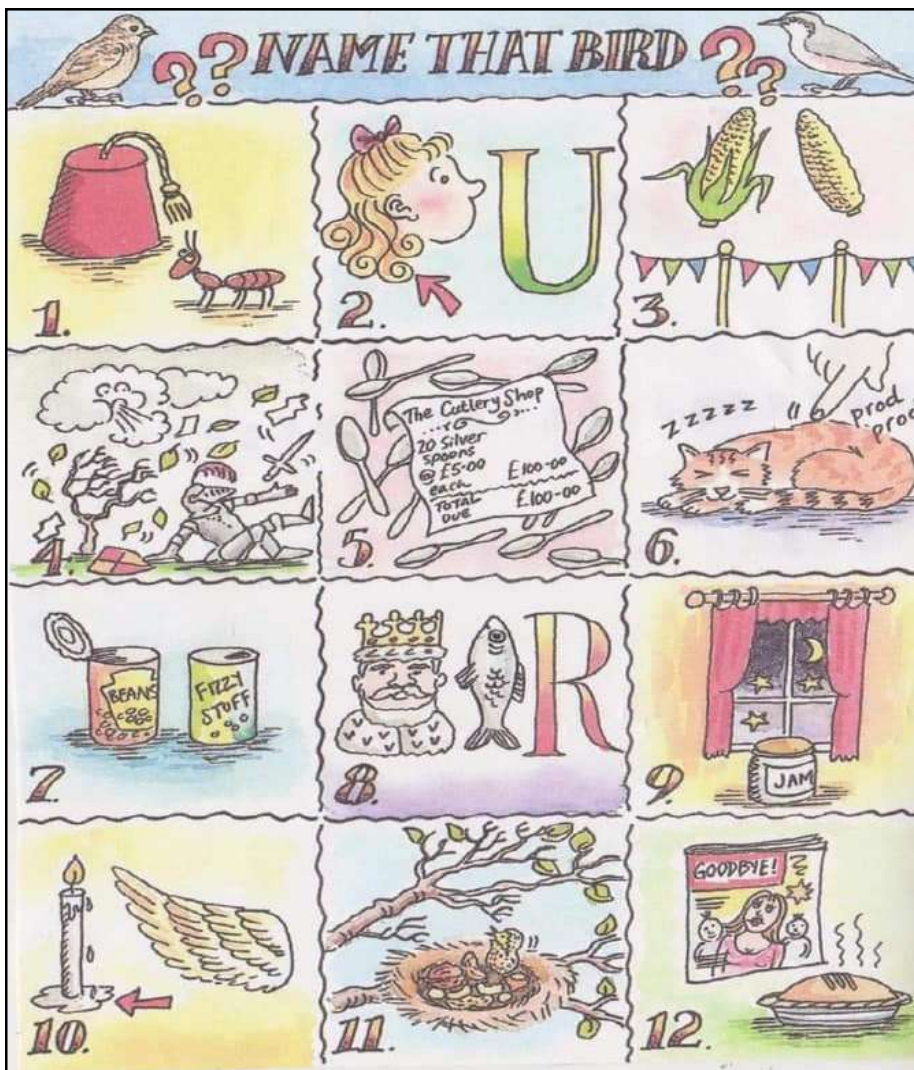
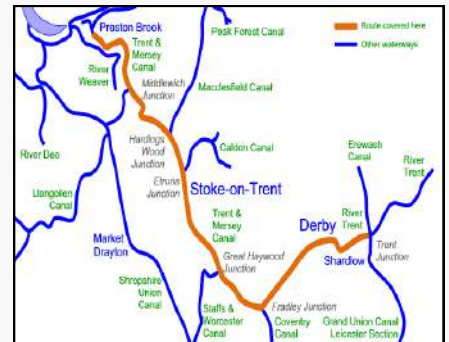
mality soon. I have had to re-book the hotels 3 times over the last few months to get everything ready to do our postponed walk along the Trent and Mersey Canal, all 92 miles of it.

I am pleased to confirm that the walk will now begin on Sunday 6 October 2020 starting from Preston Brook and finishing at Shardlow on the 13 October. This year there will be 3 of us taking part, 2 Derby fans (me and Phil Bibby) and Forest fan Dave Bradbury. I am sure there will be some friendly banter along the way!! However, that aside, the purpose of this walk is to raise as much money as possible for Prostate Cancer UK. Now, more than ever, we must ensure that progress towards stopping this disease continues. Without funds there is a risk of losing momentum. Currently, due to the Coronavirus, Prostate Cancer labs are closed across the UK and research has come to a halt. We need to make sure that when they are able to restart they have the finances in place to carry on their critical work.

The latest figures show that prostate cancer diagnosis has more than doubled in the last 20 years. This has seen prostate cancer overtake breast, lung and bowel cancer.

There are now around 400,000 men in the UK fighting this illness! Please help by giving what you can, remember, every little helps. Two Derby fans putting up with a Forest fan for a week has got to be worth something!

Finally, don't be afraid to get checked out if you suspect anything is wrong – the earlier the diagnosis the better the outcome.



Name that bird

For a bit of fun see how you do in identifying these 12 birds from the pictograms on the left. The answers are at the bottom of the page.

MacMillan Coffee & Cake morning

This year's MacMillan coffee and cake morning will be held on 26 September between 10am and midday.



More details to follow including suitably distanced eating and drinking details. Put the date in your diary. It's always a popular event.

1. Pheasant 2. Cuckoo 3. Corn Bunting
4. Nighthawk 5. Spoonbill 6. Kittiwake
7. Toucan 8. Kingfisher 9. Nighthawk
10. Waxwing 11. Nuthatch 12. Magpie

June's Mercia Photography Competition Winners

The winners' photographs for June are printed below and congratulations to Jo James, Kathryn Betts and Kev Stone for their submissions.

Each receives either a bottle of Prosecco or a box of chocolates from the Marina Office.

If you are out and about around the marina with your camera and take a photograph you think merits inclusion in the *Mercia*, submit your entries to tony@merciamarina.co.uk



Kathryn Betts



Kev Stone



Jo James



Red Mason Bees

Unfortunately, it has not been a good year for our mason bees.

The weather has been against them throughout. Cold after we put them out then wet and when they needed the mud we were in the middle of an extremely prolonged dry spell.

The affect of this has been twofold. As the females will reabsorb their eggs if conditions are not favourable they have fewer to lay. As they need the mud to make the cells into which they lay the eggs none or very little was available resulting in fewer eggs laid and in some cases thinner mud walls to the cells. As you look at the filled tubes in some of the nesters you may see that the mud has broken away in a few of them. It may look as if they have been predated but it is obvious that the mud was just too thin.

You will probably also notice that some of the tubes are being used by our Leafcutter Bees. This is perfectly normal and good to see. As they use leaves for their cells they are unaffected by the conditions. If you spot them working you will clearly see their abdomens are yellow, this is how they carry the pollen (see image).

The nesters will be left out for a few weeks longer and then collected in and stored until cleaning time in November. By then it is hoped that we will be able to get together to do this even if we have to have a table each to social distance.

I am sure we will have many new cocoons to clean but probably not as many as last year.

Jane Wakeham

If you would like to contribute an idea, a feature or submit marina news for publication in the *Mercia Mercury*, please forward it to Jo James

Phone: 07973 711431

E Mail: jojames46@gmail.com