

## A Thank You and a New Year Salute

This time last year we had no idea how much we would come to depend on, and thank, our amazing Marina teams. Month after month they have kept the marina safe, clean, ordered and a wonderful haven for those of us who live here. For those who have had to leave their boats, lodges and offices for long stretches of time, they have taken care of security and kept in touch with everyone and been available at the end of a phone day and night. We owe them all our very sincere thanks. We benefit hugely from their commitment, their willingness to go the extra million (this year) miles on our behalf.

### Thanks

Thank you to the Partners: John, Robert and Michael; to the Office & Reception Team: Tony, Lucy, Jules, Chris and Mandy; to the Housekeeping Team: Kath, Naomi, Gill, Jenny, Angela, Cheryl,

Lorraine, Geness, Rhian; to the Grounds' Team: Ian D, Ian C, Matt, Simon, Dan, Rik, James, Andrew, Charlotte, Dave, Ben and Stuart. Thank you to Chrissie, Grahame, Heg and Rich for Still Waters, The Willow Tree and The Beetroot Tree which have kept us all going; to the



businesses that kept our boats going - Midland Chandlers, Streethay Wharf and New & Used; and to all the other Piazza and Boardwalk shops and the Boardwalk Bar and Dining and Lotus who have been there for us whenever they could.



You are all **OUR** key workers and we will salute you in true boater style on New Year's Day 2021 at 11 a.m.

### Santa and his Elf Came to Mercia

It is lovely to have Santa and his Elf at Mercia on Saturdays and Sundays (11am - 4pm) through to Christmas. Children and their family members talked to Santa, posted their letters and enjoyed the excitement of the Christmas light displays while obeying all the social distancing requirements. There was no overcrowding and people waited their turn patiently and properly. There has been a wonderfully generous response

from everyone to our invitation to make donations to our Christmas Charity - South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Service's Food Bank in Swadlincote which is supporting families facing significant hardship this winter.



### Are you a Mercian Newcomer? (Then get Zooming)

All Newcomers to the Marina (whether leisure or residential) are welcome to join a Zoom get-together on Sunday 3rd of January at 11am. More details will be published on the Marina Community Facebook page and your pontoon rep will also have details. Please join in – the more the merrier!

Get to know a few more faces and ask any questions. In non-Covid times there is an annual programme of meetings and events and some of these are still running via Zoom. Share your interests with the others at the meeting and get in touch with like-minded folk.

# LOVE LIFE TRIUMPH



“Mercia just wrapped its arms around me.” That sounds like a pretty sound reason for choosing where you’re going to live next. But it wasn’t just the marina – there was the community, the narrow and widebeam boats, the canal network, living outdoors as much as indoors, the liberating feeling of getting rid of anything they didn’t need – everything contributed to Wendy and Darren knowing that the huge decision they took in April was probably one of the best they’ve ever taken!

Before then neither of them had ever set foot on a boat. They’d lived in regular houses, worked hard (Darren

continuing with that though Wendy took early retirement) and toured most of Europe on their various motorbikes the last of which, the Bonneville T120 Black, gave rise to their social media identities of Mr and Mrs Bonneville. They’d posted videos of their biking adventures over the years and when they decided to move from a house to a boat and become liveaboards they also decided to chart that change through weekly vlogs, monthly podcasts, postings and photographs on Instagram and Twitter. The website

[www.lovelifetriumph.co.uk](http://www.lovelifetriumph.co.uk), their website, links to their podcast, Twitter and Instagram accounts and to the YouTube channel with its weekly vlog ‘From Mortar to Water’.

Their warmth, humour and ease in filming the last five months of grappling with decisions in an area about which they freely confess they knew nothing are infectious. It’s no surprise that the weekly video views now number

in the thousands with a committed and active audience from the boating world, canal enthusiasts, family, friends and others who aspire to follow their lead! Their first steps towards getting a boat meant endless walking, talking and learning from those who lived in and around the Sheffield & Tinsley Canal and the Victoria Quays. These visits upended the much-voiced opinions of boats being a bit prehistoric, uncomfortable and cold, with no running water or cooking facilities. Instead they realised they had a world of options in front of them and, equally attractive, a friendly outgoing community only too ready to share ideas. The original widebeam vision turned into a new 57’ trad stern fitted out Tyler Wilson bought here from New & Used and they moved aboard and onto ‘their’ pontoon on the 10 October.

It’s a complete lifestyle change – as

many here know – but one they’re embracing with enthusiasm. Gone are the rows of boxes with pairs of elegant shoes wrapped carefully in tissue paper. Gone are the wardrobes of shirts, dresses, skirts and trousers – borne happily off by delighted family members. Hard decisions were made about what was essential and what they really needed. Food and store cupboards were similarly picked through – “after all, just how many boxes of After 8s or Cheese Biscuits do you need?” They operate a “one in, one out – if we buy something, something has to go.” They deal with unnecessary packaging by leaving it behind at the shops; even cereal bags are taken out of boxes! Christmas menus are planned – food bought and stored. The days, they say, are flying by with Darren working Monday to Friday and Wendy busy with day-to-day boat life punctuated by editing videos, trying out new photographic and film techniques and keeping in touch with family and friends. At weekends they are exploring the area on foot and looking forward to the spring when they can take the boat out and begin to do the same on our local waterways.

Wendy and Darren have happily immersed themselves in Mercia life (deliberately worded because somebody (!) has already dropped their hair straighteners in the water). They are delighted with the friendliness and support from their immediate neighbours and those they meet as they walk about or are meeting in real life instead of virtually through online blogs and videos. The ducks and swans learned within a day or two to pop by for breakfast snacks and the morning songbirds are welcomed. Their boat’s Christmas decorations are up, adding to the amazing multicoloured blinking and twinkling breaking out across the marina. Before too long they hope to be joined by a rescue dog! Welcome to Mercia, Mr and Mrs Bonneville – I think we’ll hear a lot more from you as the weeks unfold.

## Nature Society - Birds & Bees

Sadly, as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic we did not hold any events during 2020 which subsequently left us with lower funds to donate to our chosen charities. None the less we have been able to send £90 each to The Woodland Trust and The British Trust for Ornithology.

This has left us with a small running



total to go forward to 2021 to enable us to continue our work with the Red Mason bees, bird seed sales and the cottage garden. The nesters will go out again in March

in the same places as last year. Please don’t forget that we have bird items and food for sale:- No mess seed, Niger seed, Peanuts, Sunflower hearts, Black sunflower seed, dried mealworms as well as a selection of feeders and nest boxes. Just contact Jane Wakeham on 07469256447, email [janetavi5@aol.com](mailto:janetavi5@aol.com) or on WhatsApp.



While no stranger to boats, having been around them, owned them (from historic to Dawncraft and dinghies), lived aboard and sailed them for most of his life, the same could not be said of Christopher Dean's catering experience! Prior to taking on the 71' Mike Heywood narrowboat *nb Milford Star* (which he plans to change into a Café and run Boat Trips [when it's hoped to have a licensed bar]) his kitchen prowess was a Saturday job in a Sandwich shop as a youngster, making bacon cobs for four hours before heading for the sailing lake.

He worked in the computer gaming business for many years but, made redundant in January, chose that moment to go for a complete lifestyle change and bought the *Narrowboat Tea Room* which had been trading very successfully for four years at Dean's Lock on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Living in Alvaston with his partner Kim and their combined total of four children, it made sense to move the boat to Mercia for a mooring and this gave them a perfect spot on the towpath



## Boat Street

outside the marina with all the passing boats, walkers, fishermen and cyclists (and, recently, the CRT Contractors doing the towpath!). He knows he did everything the wrong way round but his temporary Operating Licence came through a month before the start of the second 'lockdown' so he was able to open at the beginning of November. For now he is providing a towpath service – Boaty Breakfasts, Lunches, Snacks and Drinks – and, as word has got around, a steady stream of custom-

ers are finding their way to them for a refuelling stop before continuing with their exercise. He, Kim and "Boat St." are completely Covid compliant and he has done all the necessary Food and Hygiene training courses. With Kim working in Medical Staffing for the NHS, the "Boat St" trading hours suit her well. At the moment Chris and Kim are open Tuesday to Sunday from 10ish till 2pm, weather permitting. This is to fit in with winter months, Tier 3 and

no on-board customers and is giving them much-needed time to get the paperwork finalised, settle in, establish good links with the community and work out how they might develop their offer to

include on-board catering and boat trips so that they complement rather than compete with the other local businesses.

We welcome them to Mercia and the wider community and look forward to seeing how things develop over the coming months.



## Christmas Recycling

With online ordering having increased significantly and Christmas posting also likely to increase if travelling and get-togethers are discouraged, please make a point of planning to recycle wherever you can AND to prepare that recycling appropriately so it goes in the right bin in the right way.

### Orange Bins

Please look at the notice for the Orange Bins; they are limited in terms of what can go in. **Boxes** need to be flattened and folded; it only takes a minute or two but makes a significant difference to the space left available for others. With **wrapping paper** the question is 'does it scrunch'. If it doesn't, the chances are its metallised plastic film



and not recyclable. And the extras – **ribbons, glitter or bows** – can't be recycled. Glittery present bags look beautiful but can't be recycled, so keep and reuse. But it's a yes to newspapers, magazines, food and drink cans (swill them out first) and plastic bottles (give them a rinse too).

How about going green by going brown?! Brown paper for wrapping, brown labels (you can find Christmassy ones quite easily) – dare to be different, save a lot of money and help the planet a bit. There is now a clothes' bin at the edge of the

long-term car park, a regular scrap metal collection and green bins for glass so please to sort your rubbish and unwanted and make sure your disposal is thoughtful, appropriate and responsible. Thank you.

## Health and Wellbeing MOT – Live Life Better

FREE Help and Support Programmes from South Derbyshire District Council

A new programme has been launched by SDDC. This is what they say: "Whether you want to feel fitter, lose weight or quit smoking we're here to help the people of Derbyshire to Live Life Better. Whatever your goal, you'll be amazed how a little extra support and advice can make a big difference. All our friendly staff are fully trained and know how difficult it can be to make changes. That's why they'll be with you every step of the way offering support and advice. So why wait - take the first steps to a happy, healthy future for you and your family." There are lots of options and suggestions and a self-assessment to complete, so have a look at the website

[www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk](http://www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk)

Sue Watson

# November's Photography Competition Winners

Congratulations to Lynn Meads, Sue Watson and Wynne Jones, October's winners, for their autumn-inspired images.

Each winner 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 *Mercury*, submit your entries to [tony@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:tony@merciamarina.co.uk)



Above: Lynn Meads  
Left: Wynne Jones



## Covid Restrictions

Please make sure you keep up-to-date with the Covid Restriction announcements which apply to your particular area and circumstances. The Marina Office can advise if you are here or



wanting to visit your boat or lodge. Please Stay Safe and look out for each other.

## Radio Repton



Radio Repton Online started on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> December. It's all about our local communities, stories and voices! Go to

[www.radiorepton.info](http://www.radiorepton.info) and just press play ! A schedule of programmes are listed on the webpage and they will repeat through the day so no need to

miss anything! They would love to hear from you if you would like to know more about it or get involved. You can contact them via [radiorepton@gmail.com](mailto:radiorepton@gmail.com)

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