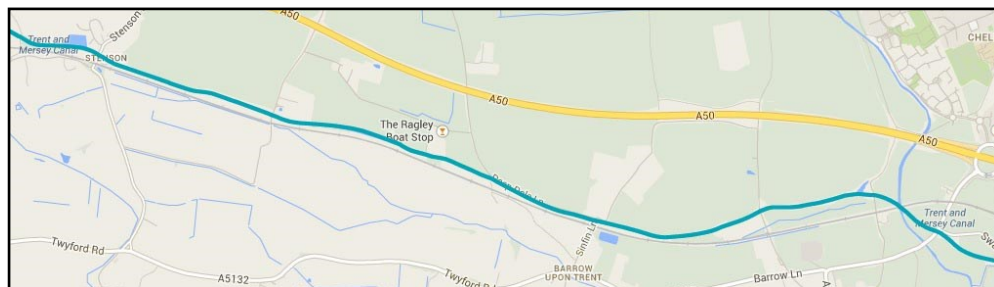




MERCIA MARINA
http://www.merciamarina.co.uk/

Stenson to Swarkestone - A Month of Repair and Dredging

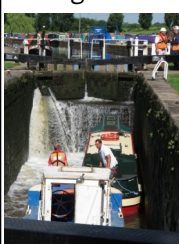


Mark Weatherall, CRT's Senior Project Manager for the Midlands, welcomed a little group of visitors to the Stenson to



Swarkestone project. His briefing was just a little delayed because the work boat had a tyre wrapped round its prop!

So the immediate job was hauling it up through the lock and into the boatyard!



Still, it WAS only a single tyre; Mark said that when Thursmaston was dredged, 200 tyres were pulled out! Dredging decisions are made on the basis of two factors - a) boaters' reports coupled with the

busy-ness of a particular stretch and b) a 'failing length'. Surveys compare 20 cross sections for each canal length (1 length = 1 km) against known depth and width dimensions for that particular bit and where these don't match up it's labelled a 'failing length' and flagged to CRT.

The full pre-dredge survey which follows decides the best way of doing the work - high pressure water, suction or (as is the case on most narrow canals) conventional dredging, the nature of the silt and its disposal, environmental issues and the most appropriate access. The Contractor (Land & Water Group are on a five-year contract) are then given the instruction of what needs to be done to what standard.

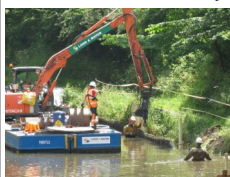
Swarkestone was last dredged 8 years ago so the current project is from there to the top of Stenson Lock.

Timing the dredging is a matter of looking for efficiencies. Can some 'spot dredging' of a known problem also be done; is the work going to interfere with navigation; is the access better at different times of the year, etc. In 1960s dredging went on all year round and with CRT catching up on a maintenance backlog, it's tending that way now. But boats can usually carry on cruising with care and being careful to follow any instructions from the onsite bank staff.

Wider canals, like this bit of the Trent and Mersey are less problematic than, say, "The Narrows" just west of Armitage or the lower part of the Caldon. Dredging usually moves along quite easily at some 30 metres a day but first the bank below Stenson needed repair and, as soon as work on this began, big stones below the water gave evidence of an old wall which had also collapsed. (Wherever there are pieces or items which might be of industrial or archaeological interest, these are set aside for the specialists to check.) So the bank repair, which should have been a three-day job became eight days.

The bank is repaired with two lines of heavy duty posts, guided into position by the lads in the water and then hammered down.

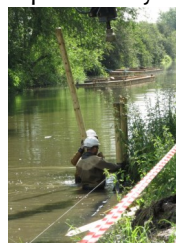
Nicospan (a specialised black mesh membrane on a huge roll) is wound along the lengths. The gap between is filled with silt from the dredging and the 'sandwich' then compressed by pulling the lines together. The end result is amazingly neat and, within a year or so, vegetation will grow over the low-lying barrier and there'll be nothing to see. In the future, when the posts rot away, the bank will



have re-established. This bank isn't meant for mooring - the lock landing is alongside; in places where CRT know boats do need to moor, they will fix strengthening wooden beams as protection.

Cost is a big factor in all this work and it's interesting that the real cost lies in the disposal of the silt. Dredging on the Weaver only costs £30 a cube (1.4 tonnes) because the silt went onto CRT-owned land. In the Birmingham the cost will be between £80 and £130 a cube.

A walk to Stenson Lock for a coffee and a look at the result would be an interesting outing. And boaters take care as you pass!



Boaters/Lodgers Forum

Terry Evans (NB Gentle Gypsy) has been elected as the new Forum Representative for the Superberths (Sandpiper, Teal and Upland Goose). Congratulations Terry and people are now free to contact you; walk round, phone/text (07739 251816) or email (ann49@btinternet.com) but avoid working hours.

The result was very close, so the Forum is also pleased to welcome Brian Colledge (NB Esme) as the Alternate.

The next Forum meeting is Tuesday, 15 July, so moorers/lodgers should get in touch with their Reps in good time. And if you want to come to a meeting as an Observer, please let the Office know.

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The Nobby Chronicles

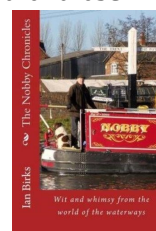
Ian Birks's book was first mentioned in the December 2012 Newsletter. But that was the electronic version. You can now get it in paperback which is a delight for those who MUCH prefer a physical page-turning experience when they're reading! Ian Birks describes his book beautifully in one of his easy and thoroughly enjoyable essays when he's talking about his and Mrs B's wandering round the waterways, saying that this 'take it as it comes' style is a bit like the book, which "wanders around a bit; after all it is neither a novel nor a speech so does not require a beginning, middle and an end." His musings have been published in both Canal Boat and Canals & Rivers Magazine so you may have read a few of them before. This is no problem - after all, one of the defining characteristics of a boater is to tell you the same story several times. And just like a return trip to a familiar bit of canal - it's never quite the same!

It's not a travelogue and it's not a series of tips and hints about boating though - as he says - there is the "ever-present of the waterways in our backdrop". It is a happy read; like sitting on the end of your boat in the sun with another boater, swapping tales of yesterday and stories which spring to mind when your fellow tells of this or that incident. So if you're not at your boat, get a copy, get comfortable and dip into its pages. You'll come out of it refreshed and remember why you love boating!

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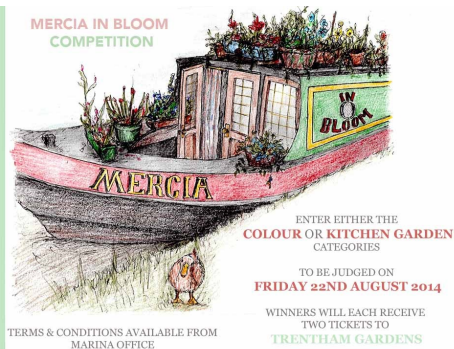


Thanks, again, to Midland Chancellors for printing and delivering the Newsletter.



MERCIA IN BLOOM

The competition is open to all boat and lodge owners.



The categories are either “Colour” or “Kitchen Garden”. Displays will be judged against the following broad criteria.

- >> Overall effect of the display
- >> Health of the plants
- >> Kitchen Garden entrants are not expected to select only plants that will be in flower or ready to harvest at the time of judging.
- >> Plants and pots are to be kept / grown on your boat (cratch, roof, windows or stern deck). Nothing is to be placed on the pontoons, jetties or banks of the marina.
- >> Lodge owners may use their decking area.
- >> There will be prizes for the winners and runners up of each category.
- >> By entering the competition you are agreeing that photos of your display may be used for publicity purposes (we will obscure the name of your boat if you wish).

Good luck with the weather and happy growing!

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BoatMON - A Review from a Moorer

It was back in October 2013 when I was reading issue 57 of the Mercia Mercury and an article from Brian Clarke about his boat monitoring system BoatMON caught my eye. This was exactly what I was looking for to be able to monitor the boat from home and control the boat temperature to stop it freezing.

I installed BoatMON rather than winterising the boat in the usual way by draining water tanks and pipes etc. This would allow us to use the boat for occasional visits over the winter period.

BoatMON monitors room temperature, the hot water tank temperature and the core temperature in depths of the boat

under the cold water tank where the cold water pipes run and automatically starts up the heating to prevent any winter freezing.

It also monitors the Aux battery, starter battery, solar panel and shore line voltages which are displayed on the status screen along with fuel level and electricity credit. It is a full monitoring, security and control system, accessible both on board and remotely from home.

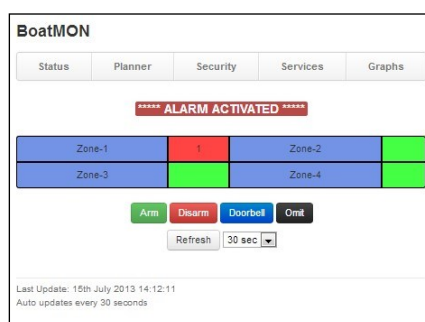
To be able to set the heating from home so the boat is warmed up prior to arrival is a great bonus for winter visits.

My background was in Electrical Engineering and I found the unit quite easy to install. All you need is a bit of DIY electrical knowledge and be happy to make connections to the batteries and incoming land line supplies so the voltages can be monitored.

I have fitted my unit under the back step and connected to the installed 3g router which gives me access from home and on the boat. The program is user friendly and easy to access displaying all the information I require when I am away from or on the boat.

If you would like to view the system, I would be pleased to show you. I am Mel Popple on nb Meladine, Kingfisher 8.

The system has been designed and developed by Brian Clarke (07766 477733) www.TheITBoat.co.uk



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The Wildflower Meadow

When you're next at the north end of the Marina, have a look at the Wildflower strip. All the careful planning, preparation and care from David Boddy and Stewart is now really showing the result a wonderful variety of nectar-rich plants in a whole range of colours.



Each couple of days there's something new to see and this is only the first year, so it's doing exceptionally well - better than expected!!

Classic Car Show

10am till 4pm Sunday 13th July 2014

Following the success and popularity of last year's event we have pledged a similar event each summer. Around 80 classic



cars, including 30 Rolls Royces will be on view. And there will be additional entertainment from Tony Johnson and the famous Derby A Cappella Chorus.

This year should be even bigger and better with the promise of a possible celebrity car enthusiast attending and inviting some new friends to join us and exhibit their vintage cars to the public and participants. It will be an exciting and enjoyable day out filled with music, boat trips, exhibitions (a car that's made up of different parts ... the first person who guesses every part right wins our secret prize!), a prize for the owner of the car voted “Best in Show”, and other award categories including Best Pre-War Car, Best Post-War Car, Best Pre-War Rolls-Royce and Best Post-War Rolls-Royce and Best Period Dress (some of our participants will be dressing up from the era their car was manufactured).

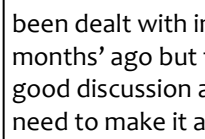
Admission is free. The Willow Tea Rooms will have a special menu, Still Waters is putting on some tasty real ales, the Fish 'n Chip van will be onsite and there will be a hog roast. Macmillan Cancer Support have been invited to fundraise at the event.

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

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Open Boaters' Meeting with Richard Parry 18th June on Frog Island, Leicester

This was to be the last of this year's Open Boaters' Meeting and, being that it was in our patch - Central Shires - Robert Neff, Jo James and Wynne Jones duly went. Some of the senior CRT people were also there so there were plenty of people to talk to about waterways' issues. The questions asked and issues raised were more or less the same ones that had



been dealt with in Nottingham a few months' ago but there was, in addition, a good discussion about Leicester and the need to make it an attractive place to moor. Recycling came up and, with it, a new fact. All CRT bins are sorted for recycling and 40% is redirected. So you bin your bottles and paper! Hooray!