



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

Mercia Mercury

March 2013 Issue : 50

Aqua Narrowboats

The April 2012 Newsletter did a piece on Aqua Narrowboats (owned by Justin and Jane Hudson-Oldroyd). At that time, eight years after they started the original hire boat business, things were going very well and they were busy. But they have hardly marked time in the twelve months since that profile and it's a delight to report on all that has been going on with their thriving business. They have two new hire boats launching this season to replace two coming out (one of which is for sale as a sponsored boat, the other is already sold under the scheme). Their bespoke order book is now full until April 2015 – and they also need to commission and fit-out replacements for the next hire boats due to come out of the fleet. With the team completing four boats in a year, and all hire boats in the fleet being five star and under four years' old, the replacement programme is very exact and needs to dovetail perfectly with the bespoke boats.

To keep pace with the volume of work, Justin and Jane have recently taken on an Engineering Apprentice bringing the staff total to three full time Engineers, three full time Carpenters and one part time office administrator plus additional staff for handovers. So a total team of 11.

The most recent bespoke boat, *Takt Up*, is now moored at the Marina with its happy owners Rachel and Trev. It is a superb example of Aqua's work – the internal picture of the salon from the galley illustrates the point well.

There is always lots of other work on the go – both engineering and woodwork, and in the last year they completed a number of jobs resulting from insurance claims. The Engineering team are constantly busy with electrical jobs, new engine installations and servicing. Despite all this, Justin will always find time to give advice and help to boaters and fit in smaller jobs wherever possible.

Given the general state of the economy and that some boat builders on the system are known to be having a less than easy time, Justin and Jane are doing exceptionally well. There are reasons for that: the quality of



their work is giving them a great reputation with very satisfied customers, they are flexible and sympathetic to their customers' needs and wishes and their sponsorship programme offers an attractive option for potential boat owners. Holiday-makers, too, are full of praise. Justin gives huge credit to his team, the pride they take in their work and the fact that they all work towards the same goals as their customers. They also believe their customers like dealing with a company that has a number of different complementary parts to its business and is based in a well-established and popular Marina with other successful businesses.

Their biggest concerns are the high rate of VAT and the constant price rises from their suppliers. They have to work hard to try and reduce the impact on their customers – whether it be a holiday booking, repair work or a new boat build. However, looking to the future, both Justin and Jane feel very positive. They are in a very fortunate position of having a full order book and a reputation for a quality product and service.

The last words are Justin's: "we are always looking ahead and never rest on our laurels (we've always a number of ideas on the go at any one time!). Although this takes a lot of time and effort (above our normal long hours of just running the business), it's absolutely essential for our continued success." For more information, explore the Aqua website (www.aquanarrowboats.co.uk)

? Quiz Night ?

The February Quiz Night at the Willows was on Wednesday, 27 February and, as usual, full to the brim with cheerful moorers and lodgers! Do keep an eye out for the next Quiz date or ask in the Office. The tables do get booked up quickly and a good general knowledge is not required! Not knowing the answers provides probably more laughter!!

First Aid Evening

The two evenings at the Willows run by Derbyshire Save a Life volunteers were very successful and well attended. If there are moorers or lodgers who missed these but would like to attend another two-hour evening course, please let Jules know. If there is enough interest, it would certainly be possible to put on another one. For those who would be interested in a more formal three-day course, then talk to Jules in the Marina Office.



RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch

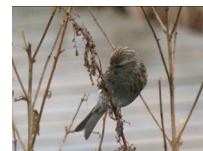
Rob (nb Piggins Barmports) took part in the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch at the end of



nature's
voice

January 2013. He has a number of bird feeders on the grassy bank beside his boat and he

monitored the bird traffic on these as well as the waters close to the boat. He recorded the following: Dunnock (2), Blackbird (2), Goldfinch (1), Blue Tit (4), Great Tit (6), Long Tailed Tit (20), Greenfinch (15), Redwing (3), Great Spotted Woodpecker (1), Black Headed Gulls (3), Coot (2), Moorhen (6), Reed Bunting (1), Crow (1), Magpie (3), Mallard (4), Lesser Red Poll (1). An amazing count!



Forum Representative

The new Forum Representative for Pontoons Redshank, Sandpiper and Teal is Nick Adams



(nb Enterprise). If you are a moorer on one of those Pontoons, do call by and see Nick and remember that he is the person to bring any issues you may have to the Forum meetings. The next one of these is on Tuesday 9 April. Nick can be contacted in person or by phone: 07946551237.

Talk by Bill Cove

Countryside Manager, Calke Abbey
6 March @ 7.30 p.m.

The next evening talk at the Willows will be from Bill Cove. Calke Abbey - which is just down the road a Ticknall - is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a National Nature Reserve designation (NNR) based around the large number of veteran trees on site. Bill will give an insight to the work of



the warden's team, news of recent developments at the site and show some of the wildlife encountered on site.

At the core of the estate are over 200 huge ancient oaks including The Old Man of Calke (above), which is thought to be well over 1,200 years old. The average large oak seen in Britain today is about 200 years old. This means this tree could have been 200 years old when William the Conqueror arrived in Britain. Please let Jules know if you would like to attend.

Clean Up After Your Dog

A couple of magnificent moorers have recently done a Dog Poo clearup. We owe them a real debt of gratitude because it's

not a pleasant task and it only needed to be done because of the laziness and lack of courtesy of others. Dog Poo is a health hazard, unsightly and unpleasant. It is also a

major E.coli polluter when washed into our marina. All but a few moorers and visitors do clear up after their dogs but there is a hard core who don't. And some think they can get away with letting their dogs out to poo in the early morning or evening in the belief no-one will know so there's no need to clear up. This really is unacceptable. Poo bins are in place and the contract we all sign states that dogs should not cause a nuisance to others. You must pick up – across the marina and in the fields around. We can work together as a community to get this sorted; if any of us see someone 'forgetting' - feel free to remind them or tell the Office.



The Oystercatchers

Through spring and summer of 2012, there were two Oystercatchers at the Marina. They made two nests in different areas and produced eggs but these were lost to predators before hatching. Reports are that they have just returned,

so we will do all we can to protect any nesting site for this year. It's not certain that they are the same pair but it is likely and we will be able to confirm this shortly because one of last year's pair had a ring. Rose Williams took the photograph and Michael sent off the details. The British Trust for Ornithology replied that our bird had been ringed as a nestling at Rutland Water in 2005. So we just need to check for a ring on this year's pair.

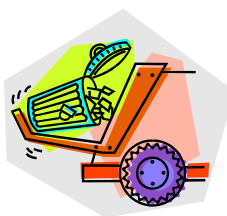


Rubbish and Recycling

There is now a significant Marina issue about our improper use of the rubbish and recycling bins. The bins are not used correctly - people are not ensuring that only recycled material goes into the Recycle bins, they are putting non-domestic rubbish into the main bins and bigger rubbish is just left on the ground by the bins or balanced on top (roll of carpet, window frames). From this week on, Veolia, our refuse company, will be weighing all bins on collection and, on the separate recycling collection, bins will not be emptied if there is non-recycling material in them.

From now on the Marina's collection charges will be increased as a consequence of inappropriate bin use.

It's therefore time to ensure that we all only use the bins as directed - treating them as we would treat domestic bins at a house in a street. All non-domestic rubbish (and you know what that means) must be taken elsewhere - there is a HUGE Household Waste and Recycling Centre at the bottom of Raynesway which takes almost everything. If you should see rubbish being left at the bins that should not be left there and you know who's left it, tell them - or tell the Office. The inappropriate use of the rubbish bins is borne out of laziness - it has to stop. It's unsightly, unnecessary and inexcusable. Some Marinas only have a single point for leaving rubbish and this is monitored. We have the luxury of several rubbish points - so let's be careful to use them properly.



Boats and Water

Two years ago and, to a lesser extent, last year, boat concerns centered on problems caused by sub-zero temperatures and ice.



Maintenance advice was about winterising your boat to avoid burst and cracked pipes.

These last few months have been very different and the focus has all been on water - far too much of it and in the wrong place. The Trent & Mersey flowed over its banks for days at a time, cutting off local roads and villages. River Canal Rescue say that a huge number of calls to them have been because boats have sunk or run into trouble as a consequence of the floods across the country. They say they've had more of these calls in the last 12 months than they've had in the whole of the last 5 years.

Fuzzy Duck, safe on her Marina mooring, ran into trouble over a Thursday night for what may be a completely different reason. This is being investigated by the owner's insurance company.

It's a dreadful thing to have happened but prompt action

from boat neighbours, the Marina staff and RCR did get the boat up out of the water within a few hours.

And it acts as a stark reminder in terms of the regular boat checks that need to be done.

There are two main ways water gets into the bilge - one is rain, the other is the stern gland. Automatic bilge pumps must be checked; looking into weed hatches and bilges every so often is a good idea. Stern glands need greasing once a month even if moored. Deck boards must be in good order, drains need to be clear and the rear deck covered if appropriate. Rainwater can collect on cratch covers which then become over heavy and can tear. Small daily changes may not be obvious but over a period of time can suddenly lead to a dramatic failure.



Art Competition 2013

MERCIA MARINA Derbyshire

WILLINGTON ARTS FESTIVAL 2013

ART COMPETITION 2013

Enter your artistic interpretation of the local area in our great art competition...

The 5 categories:
 Painting
 Drawing
 Photo
 Sculpture
 Mixed Media

Mercia Marina in co-operation with Willington Arts Festival invites artists to enter this year's competition and give your own impression of the local area.

Your subject - WATER LIVING

Entries from each category will be exhibited at The Willington Arts Festival - May 4, 5 and 6. The competition offers a great chance for local people to showcase their creative and artistic skills of all levels. Visitors to the festival will vote for best in each category with the competition vote taking place over May 5 and 6. Out of the 5 winners, the entry with the most votes will be the overall winner.

Runners up will each receive a bottle of champagne and the overall winner will receive a boat trip from Mercia Marina for up to 12 passengers with refreshments!

All entries to have your full details on the reverse along with the category under which it is entered. Entries must be received by April 15th 2013.

Win a boat trip for up to 12 people!

ENTRIES TO: Mercia Marina, Tindem Lane, Willington, Derbyshire DE65 6DW Tel: 01283 703332
www.willingtonartsfestival.co.uk www.merciamarina.co.uk

As last year, the Competition is being run in conjunction with the Willington Arts Festival. The 2013 theme is "Water Life" and the deadline for all entries is April 15th. There are five categories which will be judged separately - painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and mixed media. The entry with the most public votes will also be a prize winner. For further details please go to the Marina Office.