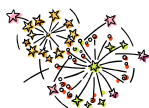




MERCIA MARINA
http://www.merciamarina.co.uk/

Mercia Mercury

January 2013 Issue : 48



HAPPY NEW YEAR and best wishes for 2013

Boaters and Lodge Owners' Forum

The Boaters' and Lodge Owners' Forum next meets on Tuesday, 15 January. If you have anything you want raised, seek out your Rep and talk to them. Your rep should be checking with you but you can always go and find them! Or you can email or tell Robert or Lucy, Jules or Tony in the Office. The notes from every meeting are emailed to all those who have asked for this; a hard copy is also held in the Marina Office.

FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

Finch, Grebe, Heron

Nigel Hunt NB MaryAnn

Email: nbmaryann@gmail.com

Ibis, Jay, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Moorhen

Celia Kind of NB Bluebell.

Email: kind.celia@googlemail.com

Nuthatch, Owl, Peregrine, Quail

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Redshank, Sandpiper, Teal

vacant

Upland Goose, Veery, Woodcock, Xantus

Richard Tandy NB Mystic River

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Yellowhammer, Zebra Dove, Avocet,

Blackbird, Albatross, Bullfinch

Mike Coates of NB Aphrodite

Email: mike.coates@hotmail.co.uk

Mercia Marina Lodges

Martin Stirling, Beech Lodge.

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Santas' Sponsored Stroll

Thirty Santas (big, small and very small!) from Findern Community Pre-School came on a sponsored walk to the Marina to raise funds for their nursery.



They were joined by members of Findern Footpaths Group which helped organise the mile-long Santa stroll from Findern Village Hall. Liz Froggatt said: "We decided to do something to help the children in our village. The pre-school is a fabulous place but is desperately in need of money for new toys and other equipment."

Tony Preston said: "It was an amazing scene to watch as more and more Santas strolled onto the site. Despite the cold, the youngsters were all clearly enjoying the experience – and what a fantastic way to raise much-needed funds for the pre-school. It was a real delight to welcome them all to the marina."

It's a Waxwing Winter!

Christmas decorations at the Marina were given a dramatic boost with the arrival of at least one flock of Waxwings. Highly coloured birds, just slightly smaller than starlings, a group of 32 headed straight for the cotoneaster berries around Facilities' Block 3 and the Lodges. They are very vocal - chattering away as they repeatedly flew up to the treetops or the tops of smaller saplings and then down again as a group to the bushes. They're



and, of course, photograph. (Thanks to Richard Triggs & Rose Williams for their photographs).

Waxwings are Nordic nomads, only arriving in numbers in certain winters, dictated by food availability in Scandinavia (there may be a poor berry harvest or a particularly successful breeding season). But they seem to be coming pretty well each year now - arriving in the UK in late autumn and early winter from their breeding grounds. The percentage of complete bird tracking lists featuring Waxwings has rocketed since November - and, true to form, Scotland has received the largest flocks to date with 1,000 sighted on the Kyle of Lochalsh!



Our visitors were around for a few days, then disappeared - although there were reports of flocks locally - but as I do this newsletter, they have just reappeared! Michael Williams (a Class A Ringer) and Rose (his Mum), who give us a lot of support and advice on birds, butterflies and moths, set up a mist net for a few hours by some bushes and ringed one bird which took just a few moments, plus time for the photo-call! It then rushed off to join the

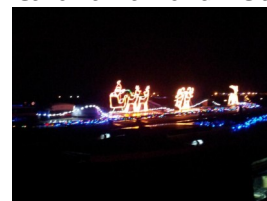
rest of its flock. Ringing helps understand what is happening to bird populations, increases and decreases and migration patterns. All of which is vital for conservation.



The next Wetland Bird Survey will be on Sunday 13 January at 10.00am. If you'd like to join the walk around, let the Office know.

The Best Decorated Boat

The competition was held in December and there were many more decorated boats than there had been the year before offering a wide variety of styles and colours. Tony posted photographs on Facebook but it was probably better to see the boats for real on a walk or drive around the Marina.



All together they made a wonderful spectacle with the Lodges, too, had shimmering lights and Christmas trees lighting up

the dark evenings. The voting box was in the Office which made it easy for people to record their choice. The well-deserved winner was Alicia Dawn (Tony Wilkinson) with a wonderful sleigh and reindeer charging along the roof. Robert presented Tony with his prize - a bottle of Highland Park 12-year-old Single Malt.



RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch 26-27 January 2013

This is a very straightforward exercise. Just spend one hour counting the types and numbers of birds you see. The best time is probably in the morning when the birds are out and about after their night 'fast'. More details and information about what to do with the results is at



nature's
voice

www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch. The Office has copies of recording and counting sheets which may help recording if you'd like to call by and pick one up. Because the Marina is more a wetland bird habitat, this activity may be more suited to home gardens.

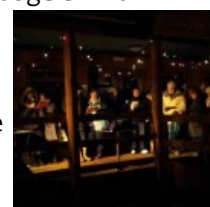
Carol Service at the Marina

The New Life Christian Centre in Derby

came down to the Marina on the 16th of December. It was a lovely service of Carols and Readings. Lots of the Christian Centre people came and, despite the rain,

so did the moorers and lodgers. With

spiced fruit wine, soft drink, tea and coffee provided by John and Susi and plates of festive food brought by those attending, it was all a great success.



Be Seen and Safe

The mornings and early evenings are still dark. We may have passed the shortest



day but it will be a couple of months before it's light at the times that dog walkers, cyclists, cardrivers and

motorcyclists are on the move. Even assuming everyone is driving at no more

than 10mph (the site speed limit), it's easy to be taken unawares with a pedestrian or dogwalker looming suddenly on the perimeter road edge - and if the dog is at

the end of a long lead, it's not always easy to spot. If you are on your feet, and so is your dog or cat, then do please make sure you and your pets are picked up by car or bike headlights in plenty of time.

There is a huge range of good products on the market and most of them are just a

few pounds. Fluorescent paint, reflective body straps or jackets for humans, reflective collars or coats and even reflective leg bracelets for pets are out there!

A couple of motorists (who WERE driving slowly) have recently had a real fright from not spotting dogwalkers until the last moment. It was scary enough for them to ask for this to be included in the Newsletter.



Waterways App from RCR

A bit of tecky stuff for the New Year! RCR have just released their Waterways App for



Android, Smartphones, iPhones and iPads. If you have an Android device the App can be downloaded from

their website (but please make sure your phone is compatible). All members are entitled to 1 free region. Enter your details and membership number at checkout and the cost (£6 per region) will be set to zero. iPad & iPhone users will need to download from iTunes and then request a refund from info@e-canalmap.co. Follow the link and select your preferred region <http://shop.rivercanalrescue.co.uk/shop/ShowProducts.aspx?Id=4012>

Boaters' Forum

Election for R, S and T Pontoons

Jane Bennett has left the Marina having done three years of great work with the Forum. Moorers on pontoons R, S and T need now to elect a new Rep and a notice has gone to each boat with details of how to make their choices. Two possible Reps (Keith Tonge, NB Ternstow and Nic Adams, NB Standedge No.1) have put their names forward but anyone from the Pontoons could be elected - it's a matter of who gets most support and is, of course, willing to do the job. The name with the second most votes will become the alternate Rep - ready to step in and attend meetings if the Rep is unavailable.

Forms with all the details are in the Marina Office or can be emailed out if you are a moorer on those pontoons who haven't yet received the information or would just like to read more. The returns must be in the Marina Office by the 3rd of February 2013.

An Evening in the Willows Thursday, 24 January



Come and enjoy talks being given by two guest speakers. Bob Acrey from the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is coming to tell us about their local projects and plans and

Steve Roe from the Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group will be sharing his knowledge and findings about bats using the marina and in the local area. We will be assembling at the Willow Tree Tea Rooms at 7:15pm. Please would you let Jules know - in the Office or by email (jules@merciamarina.co.uk) know if you would like to come so there'll be enough coffee and tea for all.



Additional Lighting

Lighting around the site is being improved.



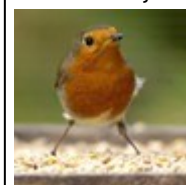
There is additional LED lighting on the storage sheds and on FB1 which will illuminate the pedestrian exit gate. The next step is raising the low level torpedo lights to provide illumination over a greater area. The Notes from the last Boaters' Forum list the areas being improved. Have a read and if you think something been left out, let Robert know as soon as possible.

Feed The Birds - Part I

The Marina's farmland and song birds typically struggle during the cold dark months from January to April before the fields and hedgerows start to green up and there's little food left from the previous year.



David Boddy's shrub and tree planting has provided a good berry harvest but these are already disappearing fast. This period has become known as the 'hungry gap' and not only do many birds die at this time



of the year but those that survive suffer too as a poor start to the year leads to lower breeding success as birds are not in tiptop condition.

For farmland and song birds, fatballs are excellent. Make your own by pouring melted fat (fresh suet or lard) onto a mixture of ingredients such as seeds, nuts, dried fruit, oatmeal, cheese and cake. Use about one-third fat to two-thirds mixture. Let it set in, say, an empty coconut shell, plastic cup or tit bell. Alternatively, turn it out onto your bird table when solid. Peanuts (unsalted and unroasted) are rich in fat and popular with tits, greenfinches, house sparrows, nuthatches, great spotted woodpeckers and siskins. Crushed nuts attract robins, dunnocks and wrens.



Also feed kitchen scraps such as mild grated cheese, cooked potatoes, pastry and dried fruit. Fruit, especially bruised apples and pears, will be popular with thrushes and blackbirds. Tits, nuthatches, and tree creepers will go for a suspended log with cracks and holes filled with fatty food. Sunflower seeds and seed mixes attract tits, siskins and greenfinches. There are good examples of bird tables and feeders around the marina and lots of advice online from the RSPB. For the table, a simple tray is perfectly adequate and is suitable for many species and most food. Make feed stations safe from squirrels and cats, don't use nylon mesh bags and have a regular spring clean to get rid of droppings and any mouldy food.

Feed regularly and in the morning and early afternoon if you can.

Next Month - Part II: Feeding the Swans, Ducks and other water birds.

(Photographs by Val Storey, Rose Williams)