

## PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



Congratulations to Denise Feast for submitting the winning photograph in the September Competition. Send your entries to: [lucy@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:lucy@merciamarina.co.uk)

## BUSKING



The final Bandstand Busk of the season was a great success with lively music and a good audience. More and More Beer and Twice Daily had collected donations throughout the season and a total of £400 was handed to Uttoxeter Lions to be given to Prostate Cancer UK. Huge congratulations and thanks for all concerned.



## EVENTS

The Events Committee has been arranging the winter timetable and the following are dates for November. With the exception of Bonfire Night and the Harrogate trip, all the events will be in the Willow Tea Rooms from 7 – 9 p.m. Many thanks to Helen for letting the Tea Rooms be used.

**4th - Craft Night.** A popular night with plenty going on. Newcomers welcome.

**5th, 12th, 19th and 26th - Watercolour Class.** This ten-week Watercolour course started in October but feel free to join in – the classes may continue beyond the ten weeks if there is enough interest.

**8th – Bonfire/Fireworks** (see poster)

**11th - Music Night** We suggest that during this evening the group decide when they would like to meet and how often. Musicians of every ability are welcome, so even if you are just learning an instrument or are competent please come along. Cost of this is £1 per session and free tea & coffee is supplied.

**18th – Quiz** – contact the Office to book a place or a team. Always full, always popular, always fun!

**24th - The Book Club** – The meetings (cost £1) will be held on the last Tuesday of each month with the inaugural one on **Tuesday 27th October**. There will be tea and coffee and it will be led by Nancy Harman. You can contact Nancy by email ([mercialevents@hotmail.com](mailto:mercialevents@hotmail.com)) or by phone, 07411946455 if you'd like to join. At the first meeting there wasn't a book to discuss, so those that came brought a book they had enjoyed to share and the discussion got us started.

**25th – Beetle Drive** - contact the Office to book a place or a team. Meet new people and have fun!

**28th – Harrogate Trip.** A coach has been booked and there may be a space or two if anyone would like to join in – either going to the Exhibition or just wanting a day out in Harrogate. Contact Nancy Harman (quickly!) – see contact details above - to see if there's room.

Plans are afoot to add a Photography Group (thanks to help from the South Derbyshire Photography Group). More information will be coming out shortly, so make sure you let [mercialevents@hotmail.com](mailto:mercialevents@hotmail.com) know if you are interested. And would everyone to check their junk mail folders to ensure they are receiving emails from both [mercialevents@hotmail.com](mailto:mercialevents@hotmail.com) and [mercivolunteers@hotmail.com](mailto:mercivolunteers@hotmail.com) as several people say they have not received the latest Newsletter with the year's Events Calendar included.



# Mercia MERCURY

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MERCIA MARINA  
DERBYSHIRE  
[www.merciamarina.co.uk](http://www.merciamarina.co.uk)

## SPONSORED WALK



The whole of Findern Primary School wound their way down the towpath and across the field to visit Mercia Marina on a sponsored walk at the beginning of October. Family and friends supported them all, raising money for school funds

## GOLDEN WINDLASS



Congratulations to those awarded Golden Windlasses for their contributions to the community. Seen in the photograph: (l-r) Kev, Angie, Wynne, Chris, Tom, Mike.



Our thanks to Midland Chandlers for their support for the Newsletter.

## BOATERS & LODGE OWNERS FORUM

The Forum General Election saw a pleasing level of participation; the 150+ votes cast for 6 Rep positions were split amongst 19 people.

In the end, three of the existing Reps were re-elected, namely Mike Coates, Nigel Hunt and Bob Drummond. They will be joined by three new Reps, namely Keith Seals, Maisie Trotman and Viv Thompson for the first meeting on 3rd November.

To those who were not re-elected, who did not seek re-election or lost their constituency due to boundary changes, we would like to say a big thank you for your hard work and participation.

The Forum Reps are:

**Mike Coates** (NB *Aphrodite* for Albatross, Avocet, Blackbird, Bullfinch and Zebra Dove)

**Nigel Hunt** (NB *Mary Ann* for Egret, Finch, Grebe and Heron)

**Keith Seals** (NB *Rollybrick* for Ibis, Jay, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Moorhen)

**Maisie Trotman** (NB *Global Spirit* for Nuthatch, Owl, Peregrine, and Quail)

**Viv Thompson** (NB *Steel Blue Lady* for Redshank, Sandpiper, Teal and Upland Goose)

**Bob Drummond** (NB *Mrs D* for Veery, Woodcock, Xantus, Yellowhammer and The Lodges)

A new guide will be published shortly.



Rep boundaries for Forum



Bob and Mike, re-elected Reps to the Forum, are happy users of the Community Bike Share Scheme!

## HOG ROAST



The Marina Hogroast was, for the second year running, held in glorious sunshine. Redshaws produced an amazing roast with Chrissy and Grahame supplying the bar. A big crowd gathered and enjoyed a great afternoon. Thanks to all those involved with the organisation and arrangements





## NOW & THEN



Mercia Marina opened on the 6th of September 2008. The last seven years have seen it develop and mature into an amazingly successful community of some 600 boats, two dozen holiday lodges, the chandlery, the boat brokerage, boat builder and boat yard, café and tea rooms, bar and bistro and retail outlets. And all this enhanced by a £85k planting scheme, featuring wildflower banks, reed beds, semi mature trees and native plants.



Over 140 bookings for berths were made before the marina even opened and those early times are well-remembered by the early arrivals who have been here ever since. Clive and Kay (nb. *Missy Moo*) booked their mooring before the Marina opened because they needed an end mooring on the flat which would be accessible for their daughter Katie and her wheelchair. Living just the other side of the A50, they had read the local press stories about the Marina and that got them thinking about having a boat built, particularly since they would be well placed to visit and go cruising frequently. As the work advanced – alongside the building of their bespoke narrowboat – they would walk up the canal from Willington to watch. They selected their mooring when it was still pretty much a muddy hole; saw the entrance tunnel arrive and watched the breakthrough from marina to canal. Kay is still astonished at the speed of the transformation in the

estate; she remembers Mercia, in the earliest days, being just mud and soil, a few twigs and a dirty dust track. Some things, Clive says, haven't changed. The responsiveness and helpfulness of the Marina Office, the friendly atmosphere, the personal approach which makes a moorer feel valued and the sense of style that goes into everything Mercia does. The changes – the shops, the lodges, the growth in the population and numbers of boats – haven't changed the marina's nature and every time they drive through the entrance they still feel a lift to their spirits and a smile on their lips.



Maxine remembers a single Facilities' Block and no laundry with washing machine, tumble dryers and ironing facilities! She and Lee had moved up from Cambridgeshire and chose a boat over a house despite only having been on a boat once before and that was a holiday week over Christmas and they were iced in! Nonetheless, they commissioned Nb *La Pirogue* from Stoke on Trent boat builders and spent their first few liveaboard years at Shardlow. Hearing about the plans for Mercia Marina, and welcoming the idea of being in a flood-free area, they visited the site and asked when they could put their name down and choose their mooring. When they arrived in the September, there were no ducks or song birds, no fish, no plants and no geese; the water was clear and quiet, unlike the dusty track and mud puddles around the site! There were no lights and, of course, the jetties weren't full of boats as they are now.

They've never regretted their move to a boat and they've never regretted their move to Mercia. They are delighted at the community that has developed and have a long involvement, particularly, in craft activities – from Maxine's starting a

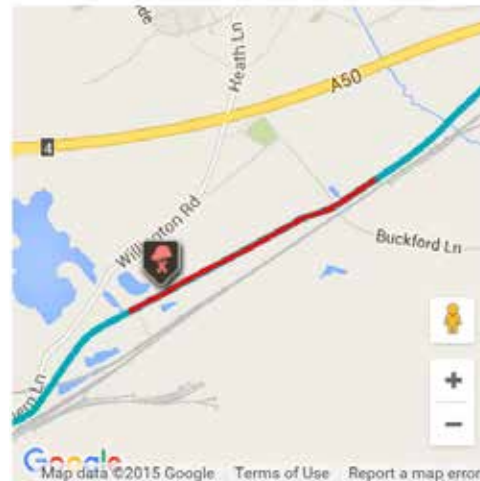
knitting group at the Willows soon after they arrived through to Lee's joining the new Art Class. Maxine says whenever there's a problem, it gets sorted and, when the residential moorers' moves were planned, the Office were hugely helpful in finding them the perfect alternate mooring that gave her the easy access she needs.



Unlike the other 'earlybirds', Phil and Eunice (nb The Way Ahead) have a boating history that goes back over thirty years and, for 20 years, their boat was one of those on the online moorings on the farmer's fields which became part of Mercia Marina. With those mooring disappearing staying where they were was not an option. They were the second boat to book their marina mooring and, after six months in Willington while the marina and its entrance was finished, they moved inside and onto their pontoon as soon as it opened. Having boated extensively around the whole system for most of their narrowboat lives, they are now leisure boaters, living half an hour away, but coming down regularly and stopping on the boat whenever they can. For Phil and Eunice, Mercia offered a very different way of living. They'd never stayed in a Marina before, only visiting places such as Sawley and Springhaven to pick up diesel. Now they had water and electricity at their boat, car parking and excellent security which was (and is) most welcome after living on the cut where breakins did – and do – happen. They, too, remember the dirt road, the lack of trees and the feeling of space before the jetties filled with boats. There weren't a lot of liveaboards in the early days but that, too, has changed and there is a different atmosphere now, they say. But after eight years on exactly the same mooring, it is still "great to come down here and get away".

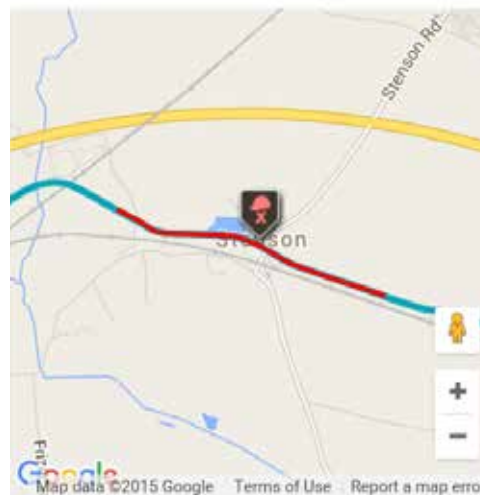
## NAVIGATION CLOSURE

### Notice Location



On Monday, 2nd November the Trent & Mersey Canal will be closed to navigation at Potlocks Bridge (the white footbridge just by the Marina entrance) and at Stenson Lock (1.5 miles eastwards). The towpath will remain open during the closure period. Both closures are listed as lasting till mid-December but, with only part of the work to Stenson going ahead, the lock may be open to navigation a bit sooner.

### Notice Location



Stenson is having its top gates replaced and a number of coping stones replaced. Stop planks will be dropped in above the top gates and the water level in the lock lowered to below the cill. The lock gates – these ones made at the Canal & River Trust Bradley workshop at a cost of some £10k each – are hand made by carpenters in the traditional way out of green sustainably grown oak. Stenson Lock Tea Rooms will be open Thursday to Sunday for those who want a grandstand view of the work!

Potlocks Bridge (Bully's Bridge in Canal & River Trust parlance\*) is having repairs

to its steelwork and having a paint job when the repairs are complete. By the time this Newsletter is out, a lot of the preparatory work will have been done. The contractors, Kier, are using parts of the Heritage Field as a work base so this will be out of bounds to everyone for the duration of the work.

A pontoon will be sailed/floated around to be placed between the Marina entrance



and Potlocks on Monday 2nd November and the navigation will then be closed. There will be a 7m x 3m pontoon across the canal (resting on the bottom – so it will be quite stable) with a 2m wide walkway with handrails both sides built across it with the ends on the banks. The walkway will create a link from the towpath across to the pathway through the Wildlife Field and up to the Marina. There will be restricted areas but walkways will be clearly marked and people can pass along the towpath in either direction and cross the canal when going to and from the Marina.

Scaffolding for the bridge will span the canal and EnviroWrap will encompass the bridge to contain dust from grit blasting and other debris. Potlocks sways and the rhythm of those walking across can cause a dramatic effect and the bridge gets "excited" (the technical term!). So the work will involve taking off all the wooden planking, blasting back to the bare metal and fitting new steel bracing to prevent the sway. Then the metal will be giving a priming coat and repainted with undercoat and topcoat so it will look as before. The steps up and down, and the wood across the bridge will be repaired and replaced as necessary and new antislip sheets will be fitted. Total cost? Around £150k.

\*Delving a bit into local history – with the help of long-time local residents – Bully's Bridge was so named because of Raymond Bull, the farmer who had a cottage and a small holding just by the canal. He owned the fields on the non-towpath side too, with the narrowboat moorings. Mr Bull, the smallholding, the cottage and the moorings are all gone but the Canal & River Trust paperwork still has his name on the bridge.

## RAMS IN KENYA DERBY COUNTY COMMUNITY TRUST



I am writing an article in the Mercia Mercury, very soon, in which I will try to describe my voluntary work at Destiny School and Children's Centre, Nakuru, Kenya.

It is very hard to describe adequately how your support has helped the children, but on behalf of the children of Destiny, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Mercia Marina for their sponsorship and flag and the boat people for their donations. Also, thank you to Tony for putting together all the canal material that I used for teaching. The children loved the material, it was a wonderful sight watching the children's faces, wondering at boats going uphill. Everyone at the school liked the Marina flag and enjoyed signing it. We would have liked to have flown it at the school, however only the national flag it allowed to fly in Kenya.

From working with these young children I have witnessed their hunger for information and their potential to learn. With continued face to face support and sponsorship, education systems will develop and from this will come the future entrepreneurs and innovators of Kenya. Our support will be necessary for some time to come, but I know from the people that I met, that they want help to allow the children of Kenya to make their own country a good, healthy and fruitful place to live. Richard Burns

## THE TILLERETTES

Recently arrived moorers may like to know (and longer-serving moorers reminded) that the Marina has a self-help/coaching scheme for those who'd like to be more confident on the tiller of their boat. The Tillerettes are a small group of women boaters with a lot of experience who are happy to volunteer their time to work with any woman (or man) who may not have done a lot of boating. If this is of interest to you, get in touch with Jo James (phone and email at the bottom of the Newsletter).