

Mercia MERCURY

MERCIA MARINA
DERBYSHIRE
www.merciamarina.co.uk

HAPPY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

There will be a shorter Newsletter for the end of December but it's never too early to wish everyone a peaceful, cheerful and happy Christmas and New Year. Thanks to all those at the Marina whose work and commitment gives us such a great environment – John and Michael Thornton and Robert, the Office trio – Lucy, Jules and Tony, Kath and the team who keep everything so beautiful and Stewart, Sven, Pete and Graham

CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Marina Office:

Christmas Eve – 10am - 2pm
Christmas Day – CLOSED
Boxing Day – CLOSED
27 December – CLOSED
28 December – CLOSED
29 December – 9am - 5.30pm
30 December – 9am - 5.30pm
31 December – 10am - 2pm
1 January – CLOSED
2 January onwards normal opening hours
We are opening on all of the Royal Mail delivery dates. PLEASE COLLECT YOUR PARCELS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD.

Still Waters Shop:

Christmas Eve – 9am - 5pm
Christmas Day – CLOSED
Boxing Day – CLOSED
27th December – 9am - 4pm
28th December – CLOSED
29th December – 9am - 5.30pm
30th December – 9am - 5.30pm
31st December – 9am - 4pm
1 January – CLOSED
2nd January – open from 9am as normal
There will be no coal, gas or logs deliveries during this period so would people please get their deliveries organised early, or make arrangements with someone who could collect for them.



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

Willow Tree Tea Room:

Christmas Eve – 8.30am - 3pm
Christmas Day – CLOSED
Boxing Day – 10am - 4 pm
27th December – normal hours
28th December – normal hours
29th December – normal hours
30th December – normal hours
31st December – 8.30am - 3pm
1st January – 10am - 4pm
2nd January – normal hours

Midland Chenders:

Saturday 19th – 0900 – 1600
(closing time to be confirmed)
Sunday 20th – CLOSED
Thursday 24th – 0900 – 1400
(closing time tbc)
Friday 25th to Sunday 27th inclusive:
CLOSED
Monday 28th to Wednesday 30th
inclusive: 1000 – 1600
Thursday 31st – CLOSED
Friday 1st January – CLOSED
Saturday 2nd January onwards: Open
as normal.

Thank you Midland Chenders for your constant support for the Newsletter. Thank you to Kerry at Head Office who sorts the printing and despatch of copies to Willington with great efficiency and good humour!

GOLDEN WINDLASS



Dave Cresswell (NB *Flamingo* on Xantus) was nominated for his assistance over many hours when a fellow moorer believed, mistakenly, that his boat was going down. Unanimously accepted!
Lucy Elson was nominated not only for her hard work on the recent Welcome to New Arrivals night but also for all the extra time she puts in on events and activities. Unanimously accepted!

DAVID BELLAMY GOLD AWARD



Mercia Marina has been given a Gold Award for the fifth year running. An amazing achievement for which thanks are due to all the hard work done by David Boddy, Stewart, Sven, Pete, Graham and the volunteers.

CHECK ON YOUR NEIGHBOUR



Wintertime and especially Christmas and New Year is a good time to check on your neighbours – are they safe, warm and well? Would they like a bit of company, be invited over for a drink or a chat? Could YOU do with some company or a bit of help? Mercia is a great community and we do look out for each other so this is just a little nudge of a reminder!

BUILDING BRIDGES

Reflecting on my own early childhood, I can remember the two up, two down cottage where I lived. The only water supply was a cold tap in the kitchen over a stone sink. The toilet was outside, 50 yards away. A brick out building housed four toilets, two at each end. They consisted of wooden seats over a hole and separating the toilets was an open cesspit that was emptied from time to time. Washing was in front of the fire and in another out house with a pump. Despite this very poor background I have many happy memories of the wharf, of the boat people and my friend John. In these early years there was no welfare state, so hard times had to be endured. However the one thing that I did have access to was state education. I had given very little thought to my early years until I went to work as a volunteer in Kenya. The children, I visit and work with in Kenya, have no state education, no welfare system, no proper housing, water, sewage systems or electricity and have to scavenge for food. Can you imagine growing up in circumstances like that?

So, off I go with my two full suitcases of clothes, donated by many people from Streetlife, the local social media network. I manage a few bits for myself, mainly in hand luggage. I am accompanied by 45 other volunteers, carrying similar baggage. Preceding us are several tonnes of clothing, books, school resources and many useful items donated by numerous different people, and all going directly to the same destination, with no middlemen. I had spent 15 months in Kenya, 55 years ago and I thought things would have changed for the better. I had no idea when I arrived how poor and deprived the children and majority of the older people, not too old as they do not live to a great age, were. In the fifteen days the volunteers were in Kenya, an enormous amount of construction work was achieved. However, I feel some of the most important work was achieved through teaching. In this article I will only be able to give you a glimpse into their World. To do this I have chosen to tell you briefly about two children, Wisdom and John, and an adult Stephen.

Stephen with some of the children



Stephen comes from a deprived family, he grew up on the streets, with no education and had to get food wherever he could. However he has spirit and a desire to provide education for other street children, so that they have a better life and future. He knew what he wanted to do, but there was no one to help. So he used what means he could muster to start a small furniture business. With the small amount of money he made, he rented some dilapidated buildings, with no electricity, no running water and no proper toilets. He repaired them the best he could and opened up a children's centre for street children living in that locality. The buildings are not suitable for habitation, however they reflect the state of poverty in that area. His hard work and efforts were noted by a local charity, African Adventure, which is allied to Rams in the Community, the charity that I am involved with. Between them they decided to help Stephen to build his dream of providing education for street children. He acquired some help, a teacher and other volunteers, who had the same ambitions, and who would be working, for most of the time, without any salaries. So work with a few children began.



The Children Centre and the playground.



Wisdom is a three year old boy living with his family in a very small, four metre by three metre home with no running water and no electricity. How they all manage to live, eat and sleep in a home that size is difficult to imagine. Wisdom attended school each day looking clean and smart from 8am to 5pm. His teaching group consisted of eight others up to the

age of ten years and what they learned they learned together. You can imagine it was very difficult for a three year old, who should have commenced his school life in a nursery school. It was possible to see that this little boy wanted to learn and given the right tools would be able to learn. He loved to build things and collected pieces of wood from pallets that we were using to make tables and books cases from. He would build his own little constructions out of the pieces of wood. He was really interested in the books with barges and lock gates provided by Tony. One of the volunteers had donated Lego and Wisdom, although he had not seen Lego before, once he grasped the basics, his ability to construct was phenomenal. He had a constructive mind and with the appropriate teaching and teaching materials he could become one of the builders or educators in his home land.



Wisdom learning how to use Lego

John is a ten year old, who lives locally in a home similar to Wisdom's. He has only just started school. He always arrives on time, looking reasonably tidy. John's biggest struggle was with the rudiments of mathematics. The teaching methods being used were not adequate to meet his needs, as the teacher herself had not had appropriate training. John was a bit sceptical when asked by one of the volunteers if he would like to learn to add up because he had been trying for some time without success using dots and noughts. So first we had to build his confidence and show a few simple, quick ways to add up, which he soon grasped. There was an immediate transformation and a look of joy on his face. He was able to get through maths problems he had previously struggled with. In the two



John in the classroom.

weeks that he was being assisted by volunteers, he learnt the basics of maths and was able in that time to add, subtract, divide and multiply. It was easy to see in John that he had the desire to learn and the ability to go on to greater things.

As I watched the children looking at the resources about barges and lock gates and signing the Mercia Marina flag, I could not help thinking about how and why the Marina came to be where it is. The boatpeople, Mercia Marina and others have benefited from Josiah Wedgewood's vision. Wedgewood had the business mind and the ideas but he could not have achieved his goals without the engineering prowess of James Brindley. Wisdom and John, who you helped to support, learned many new skills in fifteen days. Hopefully with Stephen's vision and educators, they and other street children, will go on to achieve greater things. I would like to think that the street children will one day be involved in helping to build their own country, bringing employment, wealth, health and happiness. Direct support is needed to help the people of Kenya to put into place systems and infrastructure to make their beautiful country a great place for all to live. Eventually, they will only need our friendship.

By Richard Burns.

DERBYSHIRE LANDSKILLS



Olivia's 13th birthday present from her mum, Jackie, was a bit different! Jackie, Secretary of the Ashover Show, also runs Derbyshire Land-based Skills Training Programme so Olivia found herself and school friends Zoe, Tom and Jack booked on a Tractor Driving course for 13 – 16 year olds. With David Boddy's involvement in Derbyshire Life Skills and Stewart ready to make his equipment available, the youngsters came to Mercia on Saturday with their instructor – David Hodd. A perfect day for it!



SANTA STROLL



A couple of dozen Findern Primary Schoolchildren (plus parents, teachers and friends) will be arriving at the Marina at about 10.30 a.m. on the 4th of December as part of their annual Santa Stroll. They're doing a treasure hunt along the way and will be raising funds to buy much needed outdoor equipment for the school. Santa and 'Elf & Safety' (his trusty Elf helper) will be meeting them all on the Bandstand. Come and give them a cheer and drop a coin or two in their buckets!



PUDSEY



Celia Kind knitted Pudsey Bears for Children In Need 2015 and has raised an amount of £65. A wonderful result!

LABC GRAND FINAL WINNERS 2015



LABC GRAND FINAL WINNERS 2015
BEST SMALL COMMERCIAL BUILDING
Winner: Mercia Marina, Derby
·Project team: Davlyn Construction Ltd,
bi Design Architecture, Mercia Marina
·Local authority building control team:
South Derbyshire District Council

Outstanding construction was celebrated last night (10 November) as nearly 700 UK building industry professionals gathered for the Grand Finals of the 2015 LABC Building Excellence Awards. Contractors, architects, designers and local authority building control surveyors were among the guests at the Lancaster London Hotel.

Comedian and impersonator, Jon Culshaw, best known for his show Dead Ringers, hosted the event, which is held to reward the best in technical innovation, sustainability and design. The awards showcase buildings and design teams that have had to tussle with difficult technical or construction issues and building site constraints. They highlight innovative and creative solutions and building control professionalism that leads to safe, sustainable and high quality construction projects.

More than 1,000 projects across England and Wales were nominated for the prestigious awards, which concluded with 14 winning and six highly commended developments. The regional awards saw more than 3,500 local authority building control clients and surveyors participate, making these the biggest business-to-business awards series in the UK.



LABC

**Delivering building control
through local authorities**

DECEMBER DIARY



Wednesday 2nd – Craft Night
 Thursday 3rd – Watercolour Class
 Wednesday 9th – Bingo
 Wednesday 16th – Quiz
 Saturday 19th – Christmas Fuddle
 Wednesday 29th – Book Club
 All at the Willow Tree Tea Room. A very big thank you to Helen for letting the new Marina groups use the Tea Room. For further details, go to the 'Marina Community' group on Facebook and send a "Join" request. Events, discussion, outings ... lots to read and lots of information.



The December Quiz will be on Wednesday, December 16th. Get your names down quickly – it's usually a "sell-out". All Teams or individuals (who will be put into teams) welcome!



Christmas Fuddle in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms 7pm Saturday, 19th December
 The Annual Fuddle is a Bring-and-Share Event. There will be a list of suggested food in the Office from the 1st of December. Decide what you want to bring/make and come and celebrate. There will be covered space outside the Tea Rooms providing a warm welcome for everyone. A perfect opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones!



The Boardwalk Bar & Dining New Year
 Get your tickets for the New Year Party direct from the Boardwalk Bar and Dining. Cost: £20 including buffet or £10 just for the bop.

BOATERS' & LODGE OWNERS' FORUM

There will be a short "Catch Up Forum" on the 1st of December in the Marina Office. If you have any matters for this meeting, please talk to your Representative or tell/email the Office or put it on a piece of paper and put it in the suggestion box on the side of the Office building.

BEST DECORATED BOAT/LODGE COMPETITION



It's that time of year again... deck your hulls with holly and dress up your lodges for the Best Decorated Boat and the Best Decorated Lodge Competition. To enter all you need do is take a snap of your boat or lodge and upload it with the boat/lodge name onto the Marina's Facebook page. Other photographs are also welcome (a project for the photography group perhaps?). The winners will be announced in the week running up to Christmas.



VISIT SANTA

IN HIS STENSON BELLE GROTTO

NOVEMBER 25th & 26th 2pm - 7pm
 DECEMBER 5th & 6th 10am - 4pm
 DECEMBER 12th & 13th 10am - 4pm
 DECEMBER 19th & 20th 10am - 4pm

Children £6.00
 Mums and Dads £1.00

PRICE TO INCLUDE SHORT BOAT RIDE* AND GIFT FOR EACH CHILD

MUMS AND DADS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR CHILDREN
 MAXIMUM 12 PASSENGERS PER TRIP

*SUBJECT TO WEATHER CONDITIONS

2016 MERCIA MARINA CALENDER



The new Calendar is now on sale at £4.25 and can be bought in the Marina Office. It's the perfect shape for narrowboats or widebeams where long and thin is best, perfect sending through the post to relatives and friends for Christmas and it has a superb gallery of photographs sent in throughout the year by members of the Marina community.



Mercia Marina has, again, been given a 5-star rating by Visit England.