

Photography Competition



Andy Winebloom's atmospheric picture wins the Marina's March Competition. Send your photographs into Lucy (lucy@merciamarina.co.uk) to enter the monthly competition. Each winner gets a box of chocolates or a bottle of Prosecco!

Events @ Mercia Marina

A very big thank you to Louise Davies and the Entertainments Committee for all their work and planning through the Autumn and Winter in getting a Wednesday evening Events programme up and running. The number of people who came each week made it clear what a popular development this has been. If anyone would like to join the Entz Team and help with the programme for next Autumn/Winter, you'd be welcome. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for one-off events, a bit of Bob-a-longing on the estate with planting or gully clearing, or help with the Classic Car Show. If you can offer a bit of time you'd be a huge help, so just talk to the Office and they'll pass your name to Louise.



Lesley Mason's first Mug Tug at Barton Marina opened for business in October 2010. She had always been attracted to the idea of a boat-based business but couldn't see how this could work with her complementary therapy training. On a visit to wet and windy Wales, she visited a Paint a Pot studio which proved to be a revelation - all ages having

huge fun. An idea was born and within 18 months The Mug Tug (named for the mug she painted on that visit in Wales) was launched. Lesley had heard of Mercia's development and came on a visit last July for her husband's birthday. Delighted with the style and quality of the development, she decided there and then on Mug Tug Too opening its doors on the 6th of April. The widebeam is beautifully fitted out and caters for individuals, school groups, play and pre-school groups, birthday parties and WIs. Any age from 0 - 100, she says! People can do handprints, finger or foot prints onto mugs, trinket boxes, plates, figurines, bowls and teapots. There are 'boy' shapes too - footballs, bulldozers, tractors, staketboards and even X-box controllers! And there is decoupage, stuff a bear, foam clay - so many things to explore. My favourite were the Birthday Plates - what a cracking idea!! So get yourself down to the trading boats' moorings at the end of the Boardwalk. The Mug Tug is an Aladdin's cave of delight and Lesley will be happy to discuss ideas or let you start immediately if you know what you want and there's room to get stuck in!



Parker - 14 months old - came in with his Auntie Jo for a hand print done for Mum and Dad. He was fascinated! His keepsake goes off for firing and is ready in a week.

Marina Speed Limit is 10mph

Despite numerous signs reminding drivers that there is a 10mph speed limit, there are those who choose to ignore or forget it. To ensure the safety of pedestrians and animals, vehicles will now be monitored at different times and in different places across the site. Anyone exceeding 10mph will be spoken to and warned that a second such incident may result, if they are boaters, in their mooring being terminated. Visitors to the site (friends or commercial vehicles) will be dealt with appropriately. So, please, slow down and don't fall foul of the new system.



March Social Willow Tree Tea Rooms

Saturday, 28th March saw a happy social gathering to mark the beginning of the boating season. The Marina is becoming more and more like a Village and it's always fun to get together for a drink and a chat! Boaters are never stuck for a good story, are only too ready to offer advice and have a good moan about the state of the waterways or the world! It's hoped to have other social events over the Summer, so watch out for announcements.

Keeping Trees & Plants Pee-Free

When you gotta go, you gotta go, but if you can encourage your dogs to wee on one of the wooden posts or barked (ha!) areas around the Marina, you'd be doing the plants, grass and shrubs a favour - especially at this time of the year when there is a lot of new growth and tender shoots.



Thank You Stewart & Sven

The Marina has been an amazing sight all through April. The daffodils, in their many varieties, have bloomed everywhere and, for that, we need to thank Stewart and Sven for all their hard work planning the hundreds of bulbs. It must be lovely for them to see the result!



Willington Art Competition 2015 Entries must be in by 10th May

Willington Arts Festival 2015

Take your artistic interpretation of the local area in our great art contest

The 6 categories: Painting, Drawing, Photo, Sculpture, Mixed Media, Poetry

Your subject - WILLINGTON TODAY

Entries from each category will be exhibited at the Arts in Willington Weekend, which will be held on the 16th and 17th of May. The competition offers a great chance for local people to showcase their creativity and artistic skills as all levels. This year we are introducing an under 16 and over 16 competition for all 6 categories.

Winners to the festival will vote for the best in each category with the competition vote taking place over May 16th and 17th. Out of the 12 winners the entry with the most votes will be overall winner.

Winners of each category will receive a special prize and the overall winner will receive a boat trip from Mercia Marina and a two course meal for 2 at our Boardwalk Bar & Dining.

All entries to have your full details on the reverse along with the category under which is entered. Entries must be received by 10th May.

ENTRIES TO: Mercia Marina, Findern Lane, Willington, Derbyshire, DE65 6DW Tel: 01283 763 332 www.willingtonartsfestival.co.uk www.merciamarina.co.uk

There's a wonderful NEW category this year - "little pictures". Get your postcard from the Marina Office and let your imagination run riot!! Prizes for different age groups.

Draw your own "weird or wonderful animal" on a postcard and you could win a prize!

Design your postcard on the back of this card using any medium (including photography) and post it in the letterbox at 16 Hall Lane, Willington or in boxes provided at venues

CLOSING DATE MAY 17

Name:- _____

Age :- 10 or under ☐ 11-16 ☐ Adult ☐

Contact:- _____

Don't forget to include your name, age and contact details so we know where to send the prize!!

All entries received by May 10 will be displayed at the Arts Festival

www.willingtonartsfestival.co.uk



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

Welcome Back Tony



After eighteen months in a non waterworld, Tony Preston rejoined the Marina Office team on Easter Monday. He's been a regular visitor in the intervening months at events and special occasions and, he says, he has been very touched at the welcome given to him and Rebekah. So, when the opportunity arose to come back, he was glad to. And his return was just like old times - a full-on Mercia event with hundreds of visitors to look after! Tony sees many changes at the Marina. He loves the softening of the whole estate with the maturing of the trees, shrubs and general landscaping. The lodges area is outstanding, he says, and, together with the moorings, businesses, shops, cafes and holiday boats, there is - everywhere - an air of high quality excellence. He sees this echoed at the front, 'public', side and this is evident from the very moment a visitor turns in through the new walled entrance. He loves the Boardwalk and its style. He sees the trading boats as a wonderful new development and hopes to build to an annual floating market which happens elsewhere on the system with great success. Finally, he's very aware of the new faces on the Marina - moorers, Boardwalk 'residents', the trading boats and the many new visitors. He says he plans to get to know everyone as quickly as possible and this will be easier because, with the new residential moorings, people are coming to the Office daily to pick up post and parcels. So you'll see not a lot has changed with our Tony - still bursting with energy, good humour and ideas and only too ready to do his bit for the Marina community.

~~~Welcome Back Tony~~~

Wednesdays the Willows

The last quiz of the season was in April - no more till the Autumn. A huge thankyou to the Marina Office for hosting and supporting this event. And to all the quiz setters who've put a lot of work into entertaining everyone!



Wednesdays at the Willows



While many Wednesday events are now taking a break till the Autumn, the Craft on the Marina will continue unabated on its regular 1st Wednesday in the month at 7pm. If you'd like to join, have more information or want to find out if there is a particular project being planned, get in touch with the Office and they will pass your details on to one of the team who'll get back to you.

Voluntary Lock Keepers start at Stenson Lock

Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th April saw the beginning of a new chapter in the life of Stenson Lock - the addition of Voluntary Lock



Keepers. Amongst them are Mick Lewins (there he is with his windlass!), Pam and Ted Kennett and Jo James. VLKs will be on duty each Saturday, Sunday and Monday through the boating season. Stenson is big and wide and enough to strike fear into the

heart of many a holiday or less-experienced boater, so we're happy to offer help to anyone wanting it. We have fun too - meeting those going through, giving local information, even doing a bit of gardening (see below!) and offering a bit of extra help where needed. Keri Cullen took on the lease at the Stenson Café at Easter and she has made us very welcome. So if you fancy a



walk at the weekend, come on down and enjoy a coffee and cake while watching us lock boats up and down! Or a boater's breakfast is also on the Café menu - though we've not tried it ..... yet!!!





**A Local Boy's Impression of 'The Cut' when Growing Up in Willington.**  
----Part One, by Richard Burns.----

I wonder if, when we start something, we ever envisage where it will finish. I am sure Josiah Wedgwood and the engineer James Brindley would be pleasantly surprised where their initiative of building an inland waterway would eventually lead. Although a lot of water has flown under the bridge since 1777 when 'The Cut' was opened, at the cost of £296,600, it was a very small price to pay for what has since transpired. I lived and grew up in Willington. I left the area when I was 22 years old, although I have lived nearby and watched with considerable interest the changes and developments to the Trent and Mersey Canal, which I always knew as The Cut.

I often sit on the grass bank behind the Green Dragon in Willington, which was the shunting



Willington wharf, the shunting yards and The Cut today

yard, and watch the array of pleasure craft travelling back and forth, where once loads of coal, cheese, beer and other products were transported from one place to another along the Trent and Mersey Canal. Some barges would stop at the wharf to load goods and some to enjoy the local hostleries. The tow path and wharf was my playground. The barges passed through quite slowly pumping out smoke from their chimneys. Most were working barges and looked well used. With some you could sense that the owners had a pride in how their barges looked and were well kept and colourfully painted and decked with plants and flowers. Some of the boat men were chatty and some downright rude. I saw many altercations between boaters and fishermen, but the moment soon passed. The canal, then, was a hive of activity. Although the canals were in decline I was not aware of this. The Trent and Mersey canal was one of the canals that managed to stay open, however it continued to see loss of trade throughout the war years, but as a young child I was not aware of the massive changes taking place. I had no idea that the canal had been nationalised in 1948, it was just a play area to me, I have swam in it and skated on it and the sight of working barges were a sense of pleasure to me. The wharf was my playground where I spent

many happy hours with John Gaskin. John lived in Wharf Cottage, into which I was often invited to play, a far superior cottage to the one where I lived. It was built where the wharf shed had stood before it was burnt down in 1935. Our cottage was just a bit further down, next to the Green Dragon pub



The wharf shed is on the left. The cottage, where I lived, is on the right.

and had one cold tap and a pump house. All the toilets for the cottages were at the end of the row beyond the pump house and consisted of a toilet for each cottage with wooden seats and a cesspit between the four toilets. John and I spent many happy hours watching the barges, watching railway trucks loaded and unloaded. The two things that spring



The cottage as it is today - behind the trees.

most to mind were the lumps of coal that I collected from under the railway trucks parked in the shunting yard for Mum and Dad's coal fire and my first ice-cream. When we were short of fuel, my Mum would help me over the wall to fetch coal. I can still remember the wonderful taste of my first ice-cream when John's Mum and Dad invited me round for a wafer from the block that they had just bought. When I recall my time there, I can still see the coal trucks in the shunting yard, John's parents' cottage and the wharf that always looked grubby and unkempt.



The bench commemorating John Gaskin, near where Wharf Cottage stood.



The canal bridge is also fresh in my memory for two reasons. As a little boy I would stand on the roadside of the bridge, looking down into the canal through the railings, feeling terrified because it looked a long way down to the water and I was afraid that I would fall. I also have vivid memories of myself at 5 years old with a 4 year old friend taking a stool down the bank and under the bridge, leaning over and putting the stool upside down in the water and inviting my friend to climb aboard. As you can imagine the outcome was disastrous as she fell into the water under the bridge but fortunately a fisherman had seen the incident and was able to rescue her. Most of my memories of The Cut were good, but a near tragedy reminded me of the dangers of the canal.



Bridge 23, just after the Green Dragon.

I moved from the cottage when I was ten, in 1949, to live in a newly built council house and my friendship group changed so I did not spend so much time with John at the wharf. My new friends and I spent more time on the canal paths and a lot of my time was spent at Stenson Bubble, watching the boats go through the locks and keeping out of the lock keepers way. He always looked a grumpy man, I am sure he wasn't, but to a ten year old his looks always said, 'You shouldn't be here'. That area introduced another fear, the depths of the lock and the water raging off through the bubble. My footfall lead me regularly between Willington Wharf, now Willington Marina and Stenson Bubble. We spent many happy hours on the bridge near the Greyhound pub in Findern. At that time boaters used to stop at the Greyhound pub for refreshments. I learnt a lot from the canal about flora, fauna and fishing. I could recognise different eggs that were either cooked outside or taken home to mum. I used the fish caught in The Cut, roach and gudgeon, as bait in an attempt to catch larger fish in the dumble holes between the canal and the railway line, between Mercia Marina and the railway crossing, (I didn't have much luck). In my teens I can remember part of the canal beyond Stenson Bubble towards Shardlow, being emptied. It was evident that the canals were changing in appearance and use. The flora and fauna was changing for the

worst. At one time you would see a kingfisher or two, but they became less evident. Working barges were less apparent, the wharf was no longer used and The Cut, through lack of use and management, became covered in weed. The banks were unkempt and rubbish was thrown into the canal. It looked and felt as though this was the end of The Cut as I had known it. Barges were fewer, the canal was not being maintained and I felt that The Cut was going to be filled in. It seemed that road and rail had taken over. Two entrepreneurs' vision for the canals long ago was to be drastically changed by the visions of boaters and new entrepreneurs. A new era for barges had begun.

**Boaters'/Lodge Owners' Forum**

There was a meeting of the Forum on Tuesday, 28th April. The notes from that will be available by email or in the Marina Office as a print out. Or ask your Representative as they will be able to tell you what was discussed and, if you want, get you a copy of the Notes.

**Boaters/Lodge Owners Forum**

The next meeting of the Forum will be in July. If you have any issues you want raised, please talk to your Representative.

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

**Ian Cowlshaw** (WB Popsey Bell) Ibis, Jay, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Moorhen

**Tony Wilkinson** (NB Cheers) Nuthatch, Owl, Peregrine, Quail, Redshank

**Terry Evans** (NB Gentle Gypsy) Sandpiper, Teal, Upland Goose

**Bob Drummond** (NB Mrs D) Veery, Woodcock, Xantus

**Mike Coates** (NB Aphrodite) Yellowhammer, Zebra Dove, Avocet, Blackbird, Albacross, Bullfinch

**Bev Wilcockson** (Fir Tree Lodge and NB Esmee) The Lodges

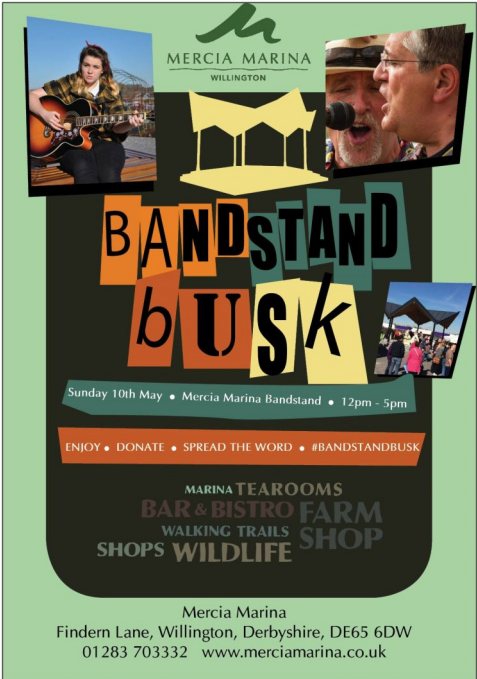
**Residential Moorings**

The Marina's application to SDDC for an additional 80 residential moorings has been approved and the Office has a list to occupy those moorings. Please make sure Jules knows your residential swap plan by the beginning of July. This swap lasts 10 months.

**Bandstand Busk**

The second Sunday of every month we are inviting buskers to take to our bandstand on the Boardwalk to showcase their talents and entertain visitors. If you are a musical artist or busker then we would love to hear from you! Please contact Tony in the Marina Office for further details - on 01283 703332 or email [tony@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:tony@merciamarina.co.uk)

**First Bandstand Busk : Sunday 10th May.**



**Milly, the Day Hire Boat**

New & Used Boat Co have added Milly, a charming 32' narrowboat to their business.



Milly is beautifully equipped with everything from comfortable deck seating to fridge, cooking, shower, TV, toilet and heating facilities. For those who've never sailed a narrowboat before, they'll be given all they need to know. And for those thinking about buying a narrowboat but haven't had much experience of the waterways, this is a perfect way of having a couple of days trial. Milly can take up to 6 passengers on a day hire too. For further information contact New & Used Boats at the Marina who'd be happy to introduce you to Milly!



**Classifieds**

Got something to sell? Is it good quality, of use to boaters or non-boaters? It could be advertised here if you have! To start the ball rolling (or wheeling perhaps!) .....



**A Folding Raleigh Evo-7**

~~~ £100 or reasonable offer ~~~

Superb condition, as new. Been ridden just once or twice. Weatherproof cover, padlock and chain, helmet, all the instruction manuals. A brilliant bargain! Collect only (at the Marina). Contact Sue Eales 07557 677547.

Sunday Market

3rd May 10am - 4pm

Following a lot of positive feedback from the Easter Market and many requests for similar events, Sketts Markets are happy to repeat the Craft and Food Market as a regular monthly event on the first Sunday of every month. At times through the year, the Market may be themed and will always offer a delightful variety. With the shops, the Boardwalk, the Farm Shop Café and the Willow Tea Rooms all open and the Trading Boat moorings now holding The Mug Tug, there is a lot to enjoy. Free entry and free parking so come and join us on May 3rd.



Trading Boats

We welcome The Mug Tug as a permanent moorer and wish Wanderlust well as Magda and Berth begin their Art Tour (they will be back in October). New touring boats will be arriving through the Summer - Golden Boyz Doggie Gifts will be here on May 9th and Reverie hand made candles on May 16th. We look forward to seeing them and their varied wares.

