

Photography Competition



**Trudy Fowler's "Mother and Duckings" wins the Marina's April Competition. Send your photographs into Lucy ([lucy@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:lucy@merciamarina.co.uk)) to enter the monthly competition. Each winner gets a box of chocolates or a bottle of Prosecco!**



**"Although this was an awful experience, it showed us the good side of human nature. We've been well looked after by all the people who had anything to do with us, including the fire service, lock keepers, Red Cross, RCR and our insurers."**

Keith and Jennie Riley's boat 'Gulliver' was probably the last boat you'd expect to burst into flames. It had been bought by them as a new boat only 15 months before. They had just returned from 10 years living on a barge in Europe and were thoroughly experienced boaters. They had even been down the North Sea and crossed the Channel. Gulliver was a 2012 build and in their initial year they travelled widely including the tidal Thames. Every day Keith did his maintenance work, checking and servicing and, indeed, looking for any teething problems or items for a snagging list. But there were none and they continued to enjoy trouble-free boating up to the locks near Preston on the Lancaster Canal. Keith noticed some smoke near a panel but despite exploring behind panels and pulling up various hatch- es and boards there was no clue as to its

origin and no smell. At the next lock they decided to moor up, clear the smoke and investigate more. They opened the hatches and went to help other boats through the lock, leaving Gulliver safely moored up. Suddenly a blaze erupted on their boat and there was absolutely nothing they could do. It took three firetrucks and 15 firemen to bring it under control. Keith and Jennie lost everything except their Passports and the clothes on their back - literally. There is no explanation as to the cause of the fire; the insurance company (Collidge & Partners) put it down to an electrical fault and Keith agrees. But that is really just a "best guess" - there was no means of determining anything for certain. Now, here they are, back on the water in less than a year. "Dormouse" came up to Mercia with them just a couple of weeks ago and they've now headed out down the Soar to the Fens and won't be back till Autumn. Has the experience changed their daily boating behaviour, I asked Keith? Do they do things differently? Did they consider not going back on the water. Keith's response is immediate and clear - the fire and the loss of everything made them very aware that, in this life, you have to do what makes you happy. They'd always found the boating life to be a good one and they missed it in the months spent sorting everything out. They haven't changed their boating behaviour - the maintenance checks and daily routines are just the same as they were before. Their insurance company were very ready to give them a new policy, so they remain properly covered for both boat and contents. Two things, says Keith, they have added to their boating life and these only for when they're estuary crossing or heading onto tidal waters where they might have to consider going overboard. One is making sure they wear inflatable life jackets that support the head and secondly a 'panic bag' which is prepared when they are getting ready for the crossing. Into a waterproof bag go credit cards, jewellery, passports, wristwatch, money and mobile phone. We wish them well on their new boat and look forward to seeing them in the Autumn.



Still Waters Gets a 5-Star Rating



Chrissy says: "We had an Environmental Health inspection a couple of weeks ago to assess our Food Hygiene rating and I'm pleased to say that we achieved the 5\* Rating. A great deal of effort has been put in by me and Grahame to achieve this and we were aided and helped by Michael."

The Bandstand Busk  
Sunday, 14 June

Sunday 10th May saw the first Bandstand Busk at Mercia and it was an excellent event. The next one will be on Sunday 14 June. If you'd like to take part or you know a musician, band or singer who would, get in touch with the Office for more information!



Annie & George on The Boardwalk  
are running a Competition!

annie & george

**Sum up your Summer**

**What's your favourite thing to do in the summer?**

**be creative & bring in a painting or come in & draw a picture!**

**Prizes to be won - ends 06/06/15**

Thank You Pete!

The editor (me!) slipped up last month in not putting Pete in the trio to be thanked for all the brilliant work around the estate. Stewart, Sven and Pete work as a team and I apologise for my error. I am very pleased, however, that so many people have told me - shows that they know and appreciate all you all do!

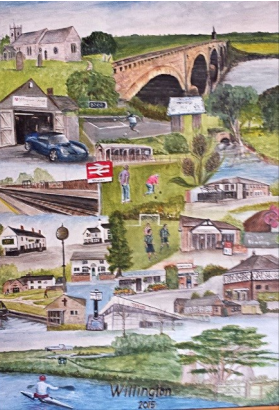
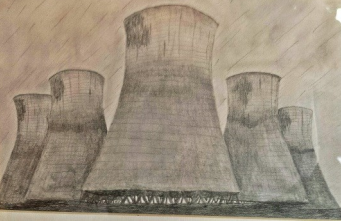
Another Apology

The Marina's 10mph speed limit applies to all vehicles. Action will be taken not just over moorers who will not keep their speed down (as the last newsletter said) but also over any speeding lodge owner, guest, visitor or commercial traffic.



Willington Art Competition 2015

The overall winner of the Mercia Marina Art Competition is Daisy Gilman (12), with her Willington Cooling Towers which also won the Drawing Category. The Winner of the Painting Category was Barbara Wain with her scenes of Willington and Barbara also won the over 16s Poetry Category. Under 16s Poetry was won by Chloe (aged 10). Simon Keeling scooped the Photograph Category prize and the Mixed Media award went to Nancy Harman's Water Lillies.



Sadly there's no space to show all the winning entries here but they are on Mercia Marina's Facebook page and some may still be in the Office.



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

Voluntary Lock Keepers  
at Stenson Lock

The first weeks of Voluntary Lock Keeping at Stenson have been a great success. As you can see, Ted, Pam and Mick are enjoying the Stenson Lock Café's cakes in the sun! We do also help boats though! This Bank Holiday



weekend has seen some 100 boats come through over the four days and both novice and experienced boaters are delighted when they spot the "angels with red wings" waiting to assist. We're expanding the team, so if you would like to get involved, go to the Canal & River Trust website and put Stenson Lock in the search box. That will bring up the detail on volunteering at Stenson and tell you how to register your interest. You don't have to be a boater, just be willing to learn and give up some time. Stenson Lock, the Café and the Bubble have all become busy and happy places and a lovely walk along the towpath from Mercia.

Mercia Marina Towpath Toddle  
Sunday, 14 June 2015

**Raise Your Feet to Raise Money for Air Ambulance & Macmillan Cancer Support**  
It is the second annual Towpath Toddle, so join your fellow boaters on a fun walk from Mercia Marina to Burton's Shobnall Fields (and, maybe, back!). You will be supporting Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support. The towpath walk from Mercia Marina to Shobnall Fields is 5 miles, with the option of walking back to make it to 10 miles. Collect a sponsor form from Mercia Marina office or ask for it to be emailed to you, suitable footwear and of course a smile. You can join in on the day for a suggested donation of £10. Last year a staggering £800 was raised but



we want to beat that this year. So we have a target - let's get those sponsor forms filled in and our boots on! Support boats will accompany the walkers and we plan to have car transport back from Shobnall for the 'one wayers'. If you do not want to walk, you can still join in; bring a support boat or offer car transport back for walkers, contribute to the communal lunch at Shobnall - and sponsor a walker! Spread the word and enlist others to raise as much as possible for the charities and have fun at the same time.

**Let's make sure June 14th is on the right path for success.**



THE BOARDWALK  
BAR & DINING

It is a pleasure to welcome Ronan Kerlo, the French Chef joining the Boardwalk team. Ronan comes to Mercia from the Newton Park Hotel near Burton, the town to which he'd moved on his marriage. Before that he'd been in Dublin, working in a 2 Michelin starred restaurant with nine chefs! Ronan is very happy to be back beside the water; he



was brought up in Brittany and his great love is seafood and the accompanying sauces. He became a chef almost by accident; he did his Military Service with the French Navy and, instead of going to University which he had intended, went to a purpose-built Catering School and the rest, as they say, is history! Ronan is very pleased everything so far - Dean encourages him in his recipe ideas, ideas for food presentation and The Boardwalk has a proper budget, concentrates on local and fresh produce and makes over 95% of everything on the premises. He loves the location, his family come visiting and he is free every weekends because he is Football Manager for T S Sports Newhall!



Sunday Market : 7th June

Plenty of shopping, eating and drinking options with all the shops, Farm Shop Café, Willow Tea Rooms and Boardwalk open.



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

Due to starting work and girls, a new era for me had begun and my association with The Cut would remain dormant for many years. When I started work, at 15, I cycled back and forth over the canal bridges, giving no thought to what The Cut had meant to me. In 1959, I left Willington, for the first time, to complete my National Service. I left from Derby for Liverpool on the Crewe line, which took me over and away from The Cut, to travel eventually to Northern Ireland, Germany and finally to Kenya. In 1961, I returned to my home in Willington. The Cut was no longer part of my immediate plans and I had no burning desire to visit it. I finally left the village when I was 22 years old to get married and to live in Derby. I did return to The Cut occasionally, for a picnic at Willington where the old wharf had stood, and with my children to sail toy boats on stretches of The Cut, to watch the boats go through the locks and to walk on the towpath. I didn't know much about canals; to me they were just there for barges and fishermen. I had no idea of the developments that were taking place on the inland waterways, until recent years. When I heard news of the improvements that were being made to the Birmingham and Coventry canals, my interest in my Cut returned. The developments of the canals and my memories from my youth finally became important to me. I learned about the development of Mercia Marina from the local paper and from the locals in Willington, a community that I was still involved in. There was talk about this new Marina that was to be developed on Findern Road. I or no one else could have visualised the outcome of these plans and what it would mean to the area. Looking back over 75 years, I have seen many changes to Willington and the surrounding



*The beginnings of Mercia Marina - the cut through to the canal*

countryside and considerable changes to The Cut. I feel very lucky to have lived my early years in an area with so much to explore and enjoy. As I sit, looking across the marina from the office side, with the derelict cooling towers and Power Station of the 1950s as my back drop, I can see the traffic on the A50 and hear some of the traffic noise from the A38. Looking further into the distance, I can see the towers of Toyota. My footfall to The Cut, from the estate where I lived, led me across fields past woodland, the Fox Cover, over the Derby to Birmingham railway line and around the dumbles, (large holes full of water), to The Cut. Often this journey would take us to Derby and Burnaston airport, where Toyota is sited today, to watch aircraft landing and taking off. Sometimes to play on or in two huge mushroom shaped air raid defences on the fields on the opposite side of the airport or to watch the occasional air display. It was on one of these occasions when I saw my first jet airplane fly low across the airfield.



*Derby and Burnaston airport in the early 60s.*

There was nothing to stop our journey from the estate to the airport, no power station, no marina and no A50, just the then narrow, not so busy, A38. The path crossed fields of different annual crops; mostly I remember there was kale or cow cabbage and occasionally fields of barley and wheat. We did not damage crops, usually keeping to the edges of fields, but I have to admit to taking the odd stick of kale and cow cabbage. We never ventured into the fields on one side of the Fox Cover, as this belonged to a local farmer, who wasn't very receptive to little boys playing in his fields. The sound of his barking dogs was another deterrent. The route we took would be impossible to negotiate today. The A50 was constructed to provide a link from the M6 to the M1. The building of this road also meant changes to the areas adjacent to this. Gravel removed from the fields left a watery area, later developed for trout fishing, which was called Willington Lake. The fields before were open to me, but this lake would not have been, as it was for private finishing. The lake is now the new Mercia Marina. Looking behind me, I can't help remembering what the area looked like before the Power

Station was built in the 1950s. Our approach to The Cut from Twyford Road, across the fields, was changed significantly, when the diggers moved in to prepare for the building of the Power Station. On our travels, as our time was our own, we would often deviate from our intended path and take in the wood know as the Fox Cover, an array of many different trees in particular Beech nuts and one large oak. This oak looked like the King Oak as in the tales of Robin Hood; it grew at the side of a small stream where Little John and Robin Hood were re enacted on many occasions. We would collect acorns from the oak to make acorn pipes with corn stems and puff at them with tobacco that was borrowed from our parents! The pipes were never very successful. The usually well cultivated fields and several acres of land, including the much loved Fox Cover, was to be torn up. Farm land had to be abandoned and roads changed to make way for a coal fired Power Station. Willington became a very busy place, many people moved in to the area to build the Power Station. My dad was one of the men employed there. Some prosperity and



*My Dad, on the left, at B Station.*

employment was generated, with more trade for the local pubs and shops. Wood, instead of coal from underneath the trucks, was gathered to fuel Mum and Dad's fire, as we dragged logs from the now devastated Fox Cover, from where Robin Hood had once come to life. The Cut to me was a ribbon of water from Stenson to the River Dove, part of my huge playground where we explored. We did not feel as though we were trespassing, as this was just part of our playground. All of these adventures have particular and enjoyable memories for me. I once remember a pea picking venture to a house quite close to the river Dove. I can't remember how many pounds of peas I collected or how much I was paid, but I can remember the walk along the towpath to get there and back. Most noticeable to me was that the canal appeared to be getting narrower. Was it me getting older or was it the edges being left unattended and growing towards the middle? At other times, depending on the season, our journeys would maybe take us into gardens off the towpath, where there was fruit to scrump. In those days we had no fear that the local Bobby, Bobby Key, would catch us. He was rather bulky and slow, and always nice to us. He was part of our community. We were free and

happy and only school interfered with our pleasure, but the long summer nights made up for this. In the winter there was still fun to be had by the canal trying to break the ice, seeing who could skim a stone the furthest across its surface and ice skating, or something resembling, though this was risky it was also a great adventure. In my lifetime, two big developments affected the area that used to be my playground. One was the Power Station, which devastated several hundred acres of land, taking away greenery and countryside and the other is Mercia Marina, which has introduced new beauty and which has also brought employment, community and pleasure back into the area. Willington has always given me a sense of community and belonging. The feeling is the same when I visit the canal and Mercia Marina. It is so good to see the canal being used in a way that everyone can enjoy. If anyone had said to me many years ago that The Cut would be used for so many pleasure craft, homes, trips, walkers and for a place to holiday, I would not have believed them. Whether you are a boater or a visitor there is so much to enjoy. I would love to have heard a debate between Josiah Wedgewood, the boaters and members of the Thornton family, on how the canals could best be used. I am sure that Josiah would be the first to have praised the development of Mercia Marina and the resolve of the dedicated boaters and volunteers in their efforts in keeping the canals open and well maintained. So, thank you all, Josiah Wedgewood, the Thornton family, the boaters and volunteers who have made this area a pleasure to visit.



**Boaters'/Lodge Owners' Forum**

There was a meeting of the Forum on Tuesday, 28th April. The notes from that are 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.

**Next meeting : Tuesday, 7 July.**

*Elegant Touch Beauty*

Body Sculpting Cellulite and Colon Therapy



Get your skin ready for the summer with our amazing deal for the whole of June!

Targets stubborn cellulite and sagging skin, a detoxifying body mask is also applied and specialised massage techniques to deeply cleanse the body's system helping firm and smooth the skin.

Was £55.00, now **ONLY** £40.00  
(Include a Jessica Pedicure for only £18.00 extra)

**Elegant Touch Beauty**  
**Open on Sundays throughout the Summer.**  
**Call to book your appointments**  
**01283 337614**

**Golf**

I'm seeking to organise a golfing group - initially to learn and, later, to play regularly. I've spoken to Derby Golf Club at Sinfyn. They are currently offering a "starter package", for £35 per person, comprising:

- 1) 3 group (3 or 4 players) coaching sessions
- 2) two rounds of 18-hole golf,
- 3) free equipment hire,
- 4) then group coaching sessions at £5 per person, per session.

There may, of course, already be golfers at the Marina, but it seems a good opportunity for anyone, like me, keen to try golf for the first time. There is more information on the club website: [www.derbygolfclub.co.uk](http://www.derbygolfclub.co.uk). I'm happy to be the Marina "point of contact", ideally email [graham.jeffery@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:graham.jeffery@hotmail.co.uk). My 'phone number is 07939 543571, though I tend not to answer unidentified callers so messages can be left, for me to return. Graham Jeffery, nb *Navigator* (Moorhen 1)

**Cancer Research Coffee Morning**  
**The Willow Tea Rooms**  
**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 10.00 - 11.30 a.m.**

Do a Mary Berry and get baking! Take your cakes to The Willow Tea Rooms. All profits from donated cakes and hot drinks will go to the charity and from donated cakes throughout the day.



**Classifieds**

Got something to sell? Is it good quality, of use to boaters or non-boaters? It could be advertised here if you have!



**9 Gold Coloured Aqualine Windows**  
**Reasonable Offer**

Good Condition  
Taken out because double glazed ones fitted by Aqua Narrowboats  
Outside Dimensions – 96cm wide x 58cm deep  
Inside Dimensions – 91.5cm wide x 53.5cm deep  
Can be viewed by contacting Pat Allen (BB10) Mobile: 07900915082

**Safeshore Marine Galvanic Isolator**  
**GI 70 inline.**  
**A bargain at £75.00 ono**  
**Bought last year for over £100.**



Not used or needed as I discovered I've a built-in one!  
Can be viewed by contacting Maisie Trotman on 07821 281966



**The Great Move** - The residential boaters' mooring swap. This applies to all residential moorers, even those who have only been in the marina a few weeks. To clarify, you can swap at any time during June. If the weather is good at the start of June please take the opportunity to swap early in the month in case the weather worsens. You must swap during June. Please let the Office know if there are any problems and confirm your swaps with them.

