

MICROPUB AWARD



Mercia moorers, Gary Hopper and Jane Thompson were delighted when the Cask and Pottle was awarded Burton and South Derbyshire Camra country pub of the year 2015. (www.caskandpottle.co.uk)

WILLOWS CANCER RESEARCH COFFEE MORNING



The Willow Tea Rooms held a coffee morning in aid of Cancer Research on Tuesday 16th June. Delicious cakes were donated (see picture!) and a beautiful cake (also pictured) made by Rebekah Preston (Mrs Tony!) was raffled. Over £250 was raised – a great sum, so well done Helen and the Willows Tea Room team and all the cake-eaters and raffle ticket buyers!



For comments and contributions, please contact Jo - 07973 711431 or jojames46@gmail.com

BOATERS'/LODGE OWNERS' FORUM

The next meeting of the Forum will be on Tuesday, 7th July at 7pm at the Nadee. If you have any issues you want raised, please talk to your Representative. There is a space for one guest if you would like to attend.

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

MOORING CONTRACTS

It is time for all moorers to renew their contracts with the Marina. You will have a letter from Lucy, enclosing your new contract and payment options information and reminding you that the Office needs copies of your boat's CRT Licence, insurance and BSC together with the signed and completed contract. As last year, by way of encouragement all those who have completed this paperwork by July 21st will be entered in a draw and the lucky winner will be given the prize of a month's mooring fees! All residential renewals will be available for collection from the Marina Office.

BANDSTAND BUSKING



The 14 June Busk raised £125 on the day for local prostate cancer charities. Next Busk will be on July 12th.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



Congratulations to Kevin Stone for winning the May Photograph competition. Send your entries to: lucy@merciamarina.co.uk

GREEN DOG WALKERS



South Derbyshire District Council are supporting the Green Dog Walkers Scheme. For more information, collect a leaflet from the Office or sign up online. When you have registered and made your Pledge commitment, you'll be sent your green armband together with dog collar/lead and badge (whilst supplies last I'm assuming). It's a nationwide movement, started in Falkirk and it would be good to see it in evidence at Mercia.



Mercia MERCURY

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MERCIA MARINA
 WELLINGTON
www.merciamarina.co.uk

TOWPATH TODDLE



Sunday 14 June saw some dozen sponsored walkers leave Mercia Marina accompanied by support boat (nb. *Voyager*) with Robert Neff at the tiller! The weather was kind, the rain holding off till we were safely back having toddled the 5 miles to Shobnall Fields and back again. *Voyager* carried the picnic lunch (great sandwiches from Helen at the Willow Tree Tea Rooms and superb sausages from Simon at Betty's Farm!) and supporters led by Sue Eales who led the walk last year but had to boat it this time. The funds raised were divided equally between MacMillan Cancer Relief and Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance. And over £1,200 was raised – an amazing total!! Well done the walkers and all those who sponsored them.



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

MERCIA'S COMMUNITY CAR SHARE



A new initiative is likely to generate a lot of interest amongst, particularly perhaps, winter moorers and residential boaters. There will soon be a little Toyota Aygo on site, licensed serviced and maintained and available for any member of the marina community (who has an appropriate driving licence of course!) to hire for an hour, a bit of a day or a day or two. It's a scheme which is now operating throughout the country under the Co-Wheels brand and our particular version has come about through the joint sponsorship of Toyota and Mercia Marina.

For boat owners who live on their boats and for the many of those out cruising for several months of the year, every possession and bit of kit needs to have an important and necessary role to play in supporting daily life. Keeping a car for an occasional trip to the dentist, picking up friends at a railway station or travelling to see a relative can be seen as a necessary evil. Now, with the availability of a little run about which can be booked and used for all such occasions at a reasonable rate, not only can the car go but also the expense of MOT, licensing and servicing! And for those who have already got rid of their car but sometimes wish there was one still there for the occasional trip – your wish has been granted!

The final details of the scheme are currently being worked on so look for more information in the next few weeks and, if you think this might be of interest to you, make sure you're on Robert's email list so that information will come straight to you as soon as it's available.

Have a look at the Co-Wheels website by all means (www.co-wheels.org.uk) but bear in mind that the marina scheme will be different in some ways. It's a lovely idea and one that has been put together by the Partners to benefit boaters and to promote green living.



There will also be a Bike Share scheme coming into operation at about the same time – so keep your eyes open for information on that as well!



RED WATCH VISIT



Kingsway Fire Station's Red Watch paid a visit to the Marina on 30th May to give advice for boat safety week. Robert Eperjesi, Andy Markham and Nicola Knight (l to r in photograph) talked to number of boaters and visitors before they were called away - sirens and lights generating a lot of excitement amongst young onlookers! Leaflets on Carbon Monoxide Safety, Avoiding Fire Afloat, Fire Safety on Boats and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service's own leaflet Boat Fire Safety Check are all available free on request.

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SOLO BOATING WITH MICK GAVIGAN



Narrowboating is, without doubt, one of the most relaxing and enviable pastimes. One guy in the corner shouts “Try saying that when you’ve just come up Stenson and the wife’s knocked the clock off the wall by opening them paddles too quick”. Bit of a ‘domestic’ here so let’s move on - but doesn’t it leave you wondering what happened.

Let’s guess? Boat comes steaming onto the bottom landing and Rosemary jumps off the bow, when it’s judged to be as near-as-it’s-going-to-get, goes up to the lock-top, struggles to open the gates, giving thanks that it was empty and for not having to fight to open the bottom paddles as well. The gates open and in comes the boat with James steering. We have two separate entities working on their own fixed tasks to get up the lock. After several failed attempts to pass the centre-line by ‘great’ throwing, finally involving a bit of roof-walking, the rope is eventually looped around a bollard and lowered back to James on the tiller who’s feeling a little over-worked by this time with all the steering and rope holding. Now for the inevitable white knuckle bit - people said “Turn right out of the marina” but no, they knew better! At least this is the last lock of the return journey, and they can go to Willington next time. Open the nearest ground paddle - because you always open the ground paddles first. 50 feet down below, the white-water rafter is burning diesel, trying to prevent the bow entering the cafe cellar. Thank goodness for the extra long centre-line, now gripped on reflex alone by the extra long left arm. Noise from engine and water is too much to either hear anything or shout above, so let’s just get it over with and get back into the marina. Just as things settle a bit, Rosemary follows him over to the cafe side, precariously using the top gates, and opens the other ground

paddle - always open the ground paddles first. For some reason James moves the boat back over to the other side resulting in another bang - he really needs some lessons in lock-cruising, or maybe it’s just something she said! Still grasping the rope, though wondering why, and using lots of reverse to hold away from the cill - “hope the diesel holds out; when did we last fill up? Oh it’s dark down here”.

From the lock top, where the sun’s quite warm now, things are looking a little calmer down there in the black-hole so time to fire up the gate paddles. One good effort should see the first one open fully - the front deck needs a wash down anyway to get rid of the damn willow seeds. In the depths apply full reverse to try prevent cill/bow modifications - another litre of diesel burned away, need to service the engine when I get back.



At least the rope’s easier now that the boat’s back to the towpath side! At the high level, over the gates again and open the last paddle; thank goodness that’s over. Well can you believe James has moved the boat away again? “We never get to talk”. Just a matter now of waiting for the last ten feet to fill and they can get off into the marina for a bit of relaxation. Sub terrain level - “More reverse Scottie”. “I’m giving it all we got captain, it can’t last much longer at these revs”. Weston and Swarkestone were bad enough but this is crazy. You can understand why someone decide to fit narrow locks here on. Wedgwoods’ pots were unlikely to get out of the Potteries unscarred, and no- body there could afford them! So where were we “Oh yes, relaxing and enviable”. So who came up with that myth? This is a work-out, an extreme

sport, on a par with base-jumping. But wait a minute there’s a bloke trying it on his own. Solo? This has to be worth watching. I’ll have another coffee and wait for the Air Ambulance to arrive. 10 minutes pass and the coffee’s gone cold, the top gates are open and the solo guys been and done it. No wonder he’s alone, he’s boring, not a bang or splash or just plain boring. Anybody see what happened? Who was steering? Has the boat got remote control? Still boring. The cafe owner’s worried because the customers want to see action. “This’ll be bad for trade, mark my words”. Willington retailers don’t want this. People will start turning left and not right for the ‘big-weekend’ trips. Nobody wants smooth-lock passage through Stenson, it’s not natural. Blame it on climate change. So what happened? Plain and simple - respect for the forces of water flow. Watch where it flows and use the flow forces to hold the boat against the side. Sounds too simple to be true but it really is that simple. Of course open everything slowly and carefully but most importantly if the flows from a paddle are not giving the required effect, close the paddle and try another. At Stenson, when a single boat is coming up the lock, open only the ground paddle on the opposite side to where the boat is positioned, and do not open the ground paddle on the same side. As for gate paddles, on Stenson the same advice works. Use only the opposite gate paddles and do not open the same side gate paddles. The same principles work elsewhere.



This method works with solos or couples or multi-crew boats as long as everyone follows the same sequence and in harmony. Once people realise the effect of their actions and understand what influences the boat, everything gets calmer and more relaxed. Boring even. Cafe empties, mooring spots available in Willington; Shardlow and Weston become weekend venues. Solo handling, as a system can be used by couples working together to share the load, watch the boat and enjoy the experience of locks rather than endure them. Why does one have to stay on the boat while the other does the lock work? Why does it need two people to operate locks safely? Why does the lady always ‘prefer’ the lock work leaving the guy to

steer? The simple answer is it doesn’t need two and one person can do it safely, but when two are present it’s easier and more pleasant. But they need to work together and just as effectively as the solo boater would. If that is achieved and, in an emergency, the boat had to be handled by just one of them they would already have a process in place to manage that situation.

By Mick Gavigan, RYA Certified Instructor and author of Narrowboating Solo - with a Crew. For more information visit: www.planetnboats.co.uk

Planet Narrowboats is a training centre for Steerer and Boat Handling Training. Solo Boat Handling a speciality.

WALK ON THE WILDSIDE



A recent and unusual visitor to the Marina over the last couple of weeks photographed by Mike Coates.

GET READY FOR WILLINGTON ART FESTIVAL 2016!



Dave Tattersall is a delightful new arrival at Mercia (sadly missing the Art Festival by a few days). When I spoke to him, he’d not even been in the Marina two weeks but was already looking for ways to be involved, contribute to the community and to share his passion for art. Going to university to read Fine Arts as a mature



student (all the best students are mature students!) while living in the Cotswolds, he then took to the water over fourteen years ago, moving his base whenever he felt he’d drawn and painted one area enough and there were new places to explore. From travelling the K&A he moved to the Midlands, with a brief stop at Barton Marina before finding Mercia. He says it suits him very well – he likes the small communities gathered around the pontoon groupings as well as the whole marina community and he would love to add art to the evident craft activity he’s seen and heard about. He has held classes for (and does) painting, etching, linocuts, printing, material printing, silk dying and even cross-stich. He’d welcome visitors and would be happy to hear from anyone (marina-based or local) who’d like to get involved (or be more involved) in art. What are your interests, he asks; what would you like to do? Go and see him on nb *Strange Brew* (N7) or give him a call/text 07985 551286.

DERBYSHIRE COMMUNITY TRUST



Richard Burns reports that £70 was raised for the Derby County Community Trust project- RAMs in Kenya 2015. The signed football went to a very worthy home. The winning ticket was picked out of the hat by a person from Air Ambulance. The young man, who won the signed Derby County football, was 14 year old Matthew Hallam, who plays for a Derby County Community Trust disability team and is an ardent supporter of the RAMs. The winner came from the Ilkeston area - the name of Mercia Marina is spreading far and wide.

NEW & USED BOAT/POD/HUT Co.



The two arrivals causing a lot of interest at the front of the Marina are new ventures from New & Used Boat Co. under the Garden Hideouts label (www.gardenhideouts.co.uk). “The Chatsworth” shepherd hut and the “Hideaway” pod are garden buildings designed to provide a space to work, relax, play, entertain or accommodate guests. They are here for display, sales and off site use – despite a number of boaters seeing the elegant addition perched happily at the end of their jetties!



PARKING

You will have noticed the work going on to provide more parking spaces in the area which has been set aside for this development for some time. As visitors to the Marina are increasing, this will provide more opportunity for everyone to enjoy the variety of different attractions on site. And, of course, it will be ready for the Classic Car Day in July. No trees have been taken down and the butterfly drift has not been affected. Inside the Marina, further parking will be created on the verge of the perimeter road alongside the H, J, K and M stretch by levelling the ground and putting down hardcore. Ideally, the parking will be at right angles to the perimeter road for ‘compact’ or smaller cars. Moorers are reminded that both here and elsewhere on the Marina, cars should not project onto the roadway – there are BIG vehicles coming on site at times – refuse trucks, cranes, long loaders carrying boats