

Lock Keeping at Stenson

A perfect opportunity for those who enjoy working in the outdoors and want to help support the Canal & River Trust. Anyone can join as long as you have at least a day a week available. Following appropriate selection, training and induction sessions, you will join a team - many from Mercia. You don't have to be a boater! Members of the local community very welcome. CRT website has details - under volunteering opportunities. Recruiting now!



The Community Fund helps members of our community during difficult times. It is funded anonymously by members of our wonderful community via donations and is then distributed anonymously to people who simply need support. We ensure we offer help in a sensitive way so that pride and dignity are treated with the utmost respect. Over Christmas we gave donations to six moorers

**How do you donate to the fund?** - You put a cash amount in an envelope and mark it for the Community Fund, put your name on it and drop it into the office. The fund is looked after by Louise Davies & Robert Neff and all details are confidential. Recipients are usually given vouchers to spend in Stillwaters. (These vouchers are also available for everyone to purchase).

December Photo Winner



Wynne's early morning photograph won the December competition. All entries to Lucy.

Here's a quote from one recipient:

*"The support I have received has meant that I have coal, electric, fuel in the car and food in the fridge. It's been a while since all these boxes were ticked at the same time. I will also sleep well tonight as a result of all these things, so thank you, and Merry Christmas all."*

Coiling Dragon Cliff Walkway

Have you properly appreciated the amazing path created by Stewart, Sven, Pete, Ryan and Dan. It is a wonderful example of craftsmanship (truly) and I'm not surprised the Chinese have sought to emulate their inventiveness. They have opened theirs as a tourist attraction - I think we're quite content the way things are, thankyou! I do, however, have to accept that our Chinese friends have come up with the right name for it - though it should be written 盘龙崖玻璃栈道



Thanks for our Thanks!

A message from Kath, Pam, Naomi, Jennie, Sarah, Jackie and Chris, together with Stuart, Sven, Pete, Ryan and Ben with a big thank you from them to us. They very much appreciated our thanks over the Christmas period for all their hard work on our behalf.



**Tillerettes' Meeting**  
Friday, February 24 7pm  
Willow Tree Tea Rooms.  
**"Know Your Boat"**

It's going to be a good and busy evening with lots coming! So, if you are, please let me (Jo) know!



**The Bali Children's Project**  
Escaping Poverty Through Education



On Saturday 17 December Grahame and Chrissy of Still Waters organised a fundraising event by selling mulled wine outside Still Waters. Kev and Angie Stone very kindly manned the urns. All proceeds went to the Bali Children's Project - a charity Robert Neff supports. We raised £100. Robert very generously matched that amount and when converted the total amount was 250 dollars. We were very touched when we received a thank you from the organisation followed by photographs of a

family that would normally be sleeping on a concrete floor but instead, the money we raised meant that the family could all sleep on a proper bed. Thank you to all those who donated.



DERBYSHIRE  
<http://www.merciamarina.co.uk/>

Mercia Mercury

Justin and Jane Hudson-Oldroyd Go Bargain Hunting!



*This is a lovely description of Justin and Jane, taking time out from their busy lives at Aqua Narrowboats, to have a bit of an adventure and some fun!. Rather than chop and edit it, it's more or less the version he wrote for his blog. So sit back, settle down and enjoy .....*

Easy I thought, five minutes of typing and a quick press of send and job done. (I was applying for a show that Jane had always wanted to take part in.

An hour and half later I was still sat there - desperately trying to recall (from the dark recesses of my mind), both of our funniest and most embarrassing moments of our life, as well as three things that

folk might not know about us, what we did for a living, our ambitions for the future, our hobbies, our interest in antiques and our tactics for the day (if we got through) and so on. I finally clicked the send button after over two hours of typing I forgot about the application as they receive hundreds every day. But a couple of months later I got a call from 'Tom' - a researcher for the show wanting to know a little bit more about us. We spent about half an hour chatting - this is part of the audition process apparently; they want to listen to how you come across and if you're chatty enough for them. After 30 minutes I think he realised I was indeed quite chatty! He did the same with Jane and after her chat he informed us that we would be invited to an audition in Grantham, although this still didn't mean we'd be on the show.

A few weeks later we were in an hotel in Grantham for an afternoon of antique games and mock up 'Bargain Hunt' type interviews, all of which was being filmed - slightly daunting in front of another 16 couples! Over the course of the weekend they were seeing over a 100 couples but only needed 26 for the next season of filming.

I was certain we wouldn't get through; the room was full of gregarious couples with loud voices and a long list of hobbies - one man loved doing archery whilst riding a horse! Another woman had just swum a sea channel somewhere and was displaying her medal! Our hobby of waterfall walks seemed a little lacklustre ... however Jane seemed a lot more positive than me - we'd been chatting with a Director and he'd explained "it's how you come across on film and whether the audience can connect".

They called a few days later - we **had** got through! We would be filming for two days, one day buying our three items at an Antiques Fair at Kedleston Hall, and then another day about a month later at the auction in Etwall, quite handy as we live there!

We arrived at Kedleston and were shown to the 'Green Room', basically a marque in a field next to the fair! We were greeted by the Director and introduced to the fellow contestants and the experts, Danny Sebastian and Jonathan Pratt (our allocated expert) as well as the Presenter Eric Knowles. Our blue fleeces were handed to us - apparently the BBC can't stretch to both Fleeces and Polo shirts for each contestant to keep, so a decision was made that Fleeces were the order of the day, due to the cool breeze blowing across the fair ground.

Soon after a researcher gathered everyone around whilst the Director explained what would be happening during the day - they were filming two programmes so there were four couples including us, two sets of Blues and two sets of Red teams.

We all walked up to a picturesque spot outside the Hall and stumbled through the interviews, this was probably the most daunting bit of filming mainly as there were three camera crews, three sound engineers, one director, two assistant directors, a producer and about five researchers, as well as the other contestants! Thank goodness they edited a lot of it out and

didn't make us look too bad!

It was surprising how difficult it actually was to purchase our items - trying to find something in a retail setting to sell at a trade auction and make money on was tricky. Jonathan our expert would also get distracted and sometimes be deep in conversation with stall holders - we kept having to drag him back to the task in question! But we did it and all too soon we were waving goodbye to the crew and fellow contestants and waiting eagerly for the Auction Day.

We thought the day filming our buys was hectic, but the auction day filming was even busier. This time they were filming four programmes worth in one day. It was an incredibly hot day and we weren't looking forward to wearing our allocated fleeces, luckily the BBC budget stretched to allow us a polo shirt too! Apparently one of the few times a team has been allowed to take away a fleece and a polo shirt - woo hoo! (continued overleaf)





(continued from front page) The Bargain Hunt Team were fantastic at organising everything, they kept everything a secret and wouldn't discuss anything about each team's items. We all had to wait in the pub next to the auction house (hard life) whilst each team were quickly rushed across just before their lots were due to go through. At one point one set of contestants literally had to run to get there in time as the Auction House wouldn't stop for the filming.

It was soon time for us to make our dash; we were whizzed through a side door, into the hot auction room bursting with buyers. We squeezed through to the tiny spot at the back of the room where the crew were pushed together waiting for us. We quickly gathered ourselves whilst the Director told us to be as animated as possible and not to worry about making a mistake, as they would cut the mistakes out later. Before we knew it our first purchase, the Dresden Bowl, was being displayed on the large screen.

Three lots later, after our last item was purchased by a Russian buyer via the internet, we were in profit!! Now came the decision as to whether to go with the Experts buy - a set of glasses and decanter. We quite liked the fact the Jonathan looked a little surprised we agreed to go with it, but we were happy for the Expert to feel the pressure! We hadn't got a clue that we'd won until the cameras were rolling and Eric announced 'the winners are the Blue Team' ! To be honest it was great to win but it wouldn't have made a difference if we'd lost, we'd had a fantastic time and we loved meeting all the other contestants. It was just a great experience I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone thinking of applying.



(For those who don't know, Justin and Jane's day job is Aqua Narrowboats here at Mercia ([www.aquanarrowboats.co.uk](http://www.aquanarrowboats.co.uk))

### Mercia Marina Authors

The Newsletter, last year, celebrated both David Brazier and Nancy Harman as published authors and now the Marina can add two more names to the list: K. L. Loveley and Andy Ellis.

May I introduce myself to all fellow boaters on the wonderful Mercia Marina. My husband and I have enjoyed mooring here for the past five years (how time flies!). During this time, I have spent many happy hours writing my book "Alice" written under the pen name "K.L. Loveley". I would like to share my news with you about the publication of my debut novel due out on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. I feel that it may be of interest to some of you as the thread of the story involves a recovery process that takes place while cruising along the Grand Union canal towards the centre of Nottingham. I hope that you enjoy Alice. If you are interested in following the author, please check out my website - [www.klloveley.com](http://www.klloveley.com) – or follow on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Alice** by K.L. Loveley

ISBN 9781786129727 (Paperback) £6.99  
ISBN 9781786129734 (Hardback) £12.99  
ISBN 9781786129741 (E-Book) £3.50



Alice is near breaking point. Floods have left her beautiful dream home a damaged mess, her stepchildren's lack of respect is giving her migraines and, worst of all, her husband is giving her no support to lean on. Her life is slowly spiralling out of control.

When Alice's daughter, Anne Marie, repeatedly falls victim to aggressive vandals, Alice finally can take no more. She decides to take control of the mess that has become her life, and finally frees herself from the chaos that has been bringing her down.

Freedom, however, isn't as sweet as Alice first thought it might be. She finds herself yearning for something she can't quite put her finger on. In her quest to find it, Alice finds herself turning to drink ...

**Andy Ellis** was born in Derby and moved to Bristol and it was there he developed his love of boats. On the tiller at the age of 11 between Bristol to Bath , he had many happy boating holidays on the Leeds & Liverpool and Llangollen. He recently arrived at Mercia to overwinter with, now, his own boat (moored on Bullfinch) and he's been juggling his job of modifying cameras for astrophotography with wanting to use his knowledge and passion for science fiction to write. *Night Time in Shanghai* took under 10 weeks, finishing in September 2015 and published last November. It's the first of a trilogy (the second novel due out later this year). He has also written two of his planned three Proctor novellas and is writing the third. Go to his website for more! [andyelliswriter.blogspot.co.uk](http://andyelliswriter.blogspot.co.uk)

**Night Time in Shanghai** by Andy Ellis, ISBN 1786290545 (Hardback) 1786290537 (Paperback)  
Plot summary on Amazon or Andy's website (excellent read; I've run out of room to do it justice!)



### The Quiz Answers! (thanks to Bruce Napier)

#### Wintry Hits

1. Who had hits in January with:
2. A Winter's Tale (David Essex)
3. Yeh yeh (George Fame)
4. Walk away Renee (The Four Tops)
5. Suspicious Minds (Elvis Presley)
6. My ding-a-ling (Chuck Berry)
7. Down down (Status Quo)
8. Another Brick in the Wall (Pink Floyd)
9. I Know Him So Well (Elaine Page/Barbara Dickson)
10. Fairy Tale of New York (The Pogues)
11. The Masses Against the Classes (Manic Street Preachers)

#### Winter Sun

1. There are seven inhabited Channel Islands. Name one that's neither Jersey nor Guernsey. (Alderney, Sark, Herm, Jethou, Brechou)
2. If you visited this island in the Indian Ocean before 1681, you might have seen a dodo. (Mauritius)
3. They used to be called the Islands of the Dogs, and then the Fortunate Isles and they have in turn had a species of bird and a kind of sweet wine named after them. (Canaries)
4. Barry Manilow had a song about this triangle. (Bermuda)
5. This island is the setting for Gerald Durrell's My Family and Other Animals, Shakespeare's The Tempest and Mary Stewart's This Rough Magic. (Corfu)
6. The Princely County of Tyrol was once part of the Holy Roman Empire. Which two modern countries is it split between today? (Austria and Italy)
7. In which country will you find the Nullarbor Plain and why the name? (Australia - it is almost entirely treeless)
8. Which theme park was 60 years old in July 2015? (Disneyland, Anaheim, Ca.)
9. In which part of which country is the most southerly ski resort? (South Island, New Zealand)
10. Earth's orbit reached perihelion on 4 January this year. Was that when it was closest or furthest away from the Sun? (Closest: perihelion means near-sun)

#### General Knowledge

1. Alamogordo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, ... What comes next? (Bikini: A-bomb explosions)
2. At which battle in 1314 did Robert the Bruce defeat the English forces? (Bannockburn)
3. Which reggae singing star died on 11 May 1981? (Bob Marley)
4. Which river forms the eastern section of the border between England and Scotland? (The Tweed.)
5. What is the financial centre and main city of Switzerland? (Zurich)
6. In which city was Martin Luther King assassinated in 1968? (Memphis Tennessee)
7. What does a numismatist study or collect? (Coins and/or Medals)
8. At which town did Billy Butlin open his first holiday camp in 1936? (Skegness)
9. Which Latin term, usually applied to legal evidence, means 'at first sight'? (Prima facie)
10. Which musical is the odd one out? Twang!, Spring Awakening, Movin' Out, Springtime for Hitler, Menopause the Musical. (Springtime for Hitler - the others are all real musicals which failed in the West End.)

#### What are you afraid of?

- If you have:
1. Arachnophobia (spiders)
  2. Aerophobia (flying)
  3. Carcinophobia (cancer)
  4. Ornithophobia (birds)
  5. Triskadekaphobia (the number 13)
  6. Hemophobia (blood)
  7. Allurophobia (cats)
  8. Aquaphobia (being near water)
  9. Xenophobia (anything or anyone strange or foreign)
  10. Neffophobia (marina managers)



### Golden Windlasses



Happy faces from **Pete Eales** and **Pat Foster** as they receive their Golden Windlasses. Another Golden Windlass award has been made to Jackie Orton and Richard Rhodes who came to the rescue of a moorer who had fallen in the water. (Be careful out there - it's cold and slippery!). Golden Windlasses are given for that 'special' act, something a bit out of the ordinary. But everyday kindnesses, looking out for each other and making sure people are o.k. are what we've come to expect from our community. At this time of year, particularly, do watch out for each other and offer help or company if you think it would be welcomed. There are many ways to make someone's day just that bit brighter - and it seems we are doing that pretty well!

### March Events

I'll see if I can get it right this time!



**Watercolour Class** Mondays 6, 13, 20, 27

**Craft Group** Wednesdays 1, 14, 21

**Ukulele Group** Thursdays 2, 9, 16, 23

**Music Group** Tuesday 7

**Photography Group** Wednesday 8

**Bingo** Wednesday 15

**Monthly Quiz** Wednesday 22

**CPR Training** Saturday 25

**Book Club** Tuesday 28



#### General Rule

**Everyone welcome. Events usually start at 7pm in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms. £1 each (money goes to the marina's charities). Check for last minute reminders and any last minute changes on the Marina's Facebook page. You need to sign up for the Quiz - do it through the Office.**



**Fire and First Aid**  
**Friday, 7pm on**  
**3rd February**

**SIGN UP NOW**  
**IN THE OFFICE**



**CPR Training**  
**Saturday, 7pm on**  
**25 February**

### Speed Limit Reminder



People seem to be a lot more aware of their speed over the last four weeks. There's been a fairly extensive conversation on the Marina's Facebook page which covered a lot of issues.

People are certainly finding out how to teach their vehicles to drive at 10mph and life is much nicer for those walking around the perimeter! Which is good news, because there is genuinely no wish to catch people out.

Our thanks to Midland Chancellors for their continued support for the Newsletter. Hard copies are picked up quickly in the cafes and shops and, for the boaters who prefer it in their hands, it is always available in the Office.

