

January Photo Winner



Congratulations to Neil Wilson - January 2017 Photo Competition winner. Don't forget to send your photos to [lucy@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:lucy@merciamarina.co.uk) to be in with a chance of winning a box of chocolates or a bottle of Prosecco.

New Bus Stop



The new Bus Stop outside the Marina is now operating fully. Because the Marina has its address in Willington, the new stop will be on that fare stage (as opposed to the stops nearer Findern which are on the Findern fare stage). The old Willington-bound stop just before the railway line has been taken away on safety grounds, but the Derby-bound stop will remain. There will be no shelter on the canal side of the road because the bank is too close to allow a safe position for it.

Tillerettes




This year there are some two dozen moorers 'signed up' as Tillerettes, seeking to get some support while they get more confident on the tiller of their boat and get to know their boat a bit better. With six mentors already making contact with their Tillerettes and putting plans in place for getting together, we had a group session on Friday, 24 February in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms. The Agenda was "Know Your Boat". Since each and every boat is different from every other (!), the only efficient way of doing this was as a group with a Q&A panel discussion. Four of the Mentors were there, adding experience and expertise. The three Panellists are known to us all and are hugely experienced boaters and enormously knowledgeable about boaty bits that move or don't move, make a noise or are silent and - importantly - which bit should do what! They dealt with a wide range of questions and issues which meant an excellent evening with good humour, lots of discussion and people getting to know people.

**The Three Wise Men (pictured, l to r) Tom Hayes (Nationwide Alliance of Boat Surveyors and Examiners and Gas Safe Registered), Justin Hudson-Oldroyd (Aqua Narrowboats), and Nigel Hunt (focussing on Fire Safety and Means of Escape from narrow/widebeam boats and, secondly, boat engineering [DIY maintenance, what you can tackle yourself and what you should leave to the experts]. A big thank you to them!!**




The next stage will be for Tillerettes and their mentors arranging to meet for practical exercises - taking their boat to Willington or Stenson, going in and out of their moorings (though not in Storm Doris-type winds!), mooring up on the towpath and navigating past moored boats. All the while, the Tillerettes will become more familiar with the workings of their boat and learn a great deal about navigation whilst out cruising. These meetings and outings will continue through the next months - the hard work and concentration matched by fun and laughter!

WATER



IN



WILLINGTON

The subject for this year's Marina Art Competition is WATER IN WILLINGTON

Capture the essence of Willington, the vibrant canals, the expansive river Trent, the ponds and streams and all the boats.

Show the real artist in you, not what you think others want to see, and this was certainly the case with last year's winner who received the Recognising Artistic Ability prize.

It's great fun to get involved and you can be at any level! Just record what you see your way, your interpretation.

Come and view the wonderful entries in the "Willington Gallery" and vote for your favourite along with public visitors to the gallery over the festival weekend of 13th - 14th May.

Friday May 12th - All artists submitting entries are invited to a private viewing hosted by Mercia Marina.

Prizes awarded for category winners, the panel's overall winner and a special prize for 'recognising artistic ability'.

3 entry levels



- PROFESSIONALS
- AMATEURS
- JUNIORS (18 & under)

3 categories

- VISUAL ARTS - drawing, painting, sculpture, knitting & digital etc
- WORDS - poems, typography, stories, creative writing
- PHOTOGRAPHY - creative, black and white, raw untouched images

Closing Date.

All entries to Mercia Marina Reception by April 29th 2017



The Wildlife in Spring



We could claim Spring began on the 22 of February 2017 as this was the first 7am sunrise. Or a month later on the 19th of March as this is the day the astronomical winter ends. But March 1 marks the first day of meteorological, or climatological, spring for the Northern Hemisphere so it's fair to say Spring has now officially sprung - as nicely shown by Sue Jordan's lovely photograph!

There is a new arrangement of the Marina's wildlife groups. The Nature Society is the 'umbrella' and within are groups focussed on Small Mammals, Bees and Pollinators and Birds. Jane Wakeham explains further:

NATURE SOCIETY  
Making a real difference



February 5th saw the launch of a new Wildlife Group at the Marina. "The Nature Society is not for the benefit of the Marina but for the benefit of all of us who live here. It is ours and we can take full ownership of it. So why society? A society is a 'community with common aims & interests' so a good name for those who have a love of nature and a desire to help improve biodiversity and conservation. Built into us all is a link to our wild heritage, even if we choose to ignore it. But as we live the middle of a conservation area it is hoped that we do appreciate all it has to offer.

What the Nature Society is NOT, is about enrolling in groups, getting more involved than you want to and feeling obliged to join in. The idea behind 'The Nature Society' is for all to get enjoyment from living in a wildlife rich area. Giving a little bit of time to improving the biodiversity, encouraging and helping with the conservation of our local wildlife. If your circumstances do not allow getting hands on, no matter, the idea is that you can enjoy what is being done or better still if you have



knowledge of certain aspects of nature/wildlife then help all those who also have an interest by sharing that knowledge, even with just a chat over a cuppa. Butterfly Nursery, Natures Highway and Hazel Copse are just some of the projects planned and these will be starting over the next few weeks. Keep eyes open for announcements. All information and Newsletters will be available on the Mercia Marina website under Wildlife."

**CAN YOU HELP?** Butterflies are in desperate decline and need as much help as they can get. So we will be taking part in weekly butterfly counts soon and some volunteers to help would be greatly appreciate. Help & training will be given. Results will be submitted to the butterfly recorder for Derbyshire. If you'd like to be involved, give your name to the Office and we will be in touch.

RED MASON BEE PROJECT

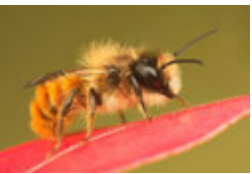
Red mason bees are only active from April to mid-June. They are docile little bees, not given to stinging and are safe around children and pets. Like all bees only the female carries a sting and it is said that the only way she will sting you is if you catch her and roll her between your fingers. Like many of our bees they are badly affected by habitat loss and pesticides.

They are excellent pollinators of fruit trees and soft fruits. With the new foraging walk full of fruit this is good news for us as well as them. So important are they, in the future they may be reared commercially to pollinate fruit orchards in the UK.

Soon you may see a new type of bee nests going up near the fruit trees behind the wildflower drift, and in the cottage garden. These contain a release chamber into which we will be putting some mason bee cocoons. Ron Rock of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust is supplying these to us. From these the males will emerge a couple of weeks before the females. The males will patrol the entrance to the release chamber waiting for the females. They mate and the females immediately set to work establishing a nest. They will use the special tubes in the bee nests to lay their eggs. Each one will be sealed with mud. Pollen and nectar is taken into the nests to feed the larvae which hatch after about a week. They then spin a cocoon before turning into an adult bee. They will remain in the cocoon until the following spring. All the males die after six weeks and the females by mid-June. No red mason bee lives to see its own offspring.

In October/November we will be removing the cocoons, cleaning them to remove mites and storing over winter to be put out into the release chambers next year. The nests will be taken down, cleaned and fitted with new tubes and put out again the following spring.

We plan to run workshops when we remove the cocoons so anyone interested to see what it is all about will be welcome to come along. It is fascinating.



NOTICES



If you notice that the SOB Cottage Garden is looking a little tatty, this is intentional as all the dead heads are a refuge for overwintering insects. It will be tidied up ready for the new season in March after hibernators have left. It is good to see that the crocus and anemones seem to be putting on a good show.

Ken Orpe, Derbyshire Butterfly Recorder and Transect Co-ordinator for the East Midlands, will be here giving an illustrated talk on Derbyshire's butterflies, how to identify them and how to carry out butterfly walks. Please come along and find out more about these lovely additions to our countryside and gardens and how we can help them to survive.

19.00 in the Willow Tree  
March 17th



Checking Owl Pellets



Woodwork

If anyone is interested in joining a Dawn Chorus Walk, there will be details announced shortly. It will probably be at the beginning of May when our summer visitors have arrived and will mean a VERY early start. If it can not be arranged here we will look at joining a planned walk elsewhere. Keep eyes open for further details.




### The Derbyshire Gold Card


The Gold Card Scheme is a travel and discount scheme administered by Derbyshire County Council. The Scheme allows eligible people access to free travel on selected bus and train services and other benefits as detailed. Eligibility is based on age which is related to the State Pension Age, excepting those who with certain disabilities, who may qualify sooner. Further information about how the scheme operates, some frequently asked questions and the application form are available on the Derbyshire County Council website ([www.south-derbys.gov.uk/transport\\_and\\_streets/public\\_transport/the\\_derbyshire\\_gold\\_card/default.asp](http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/transport_and_streets/public_transport/the_derbyshire_gold_card/default.asp)).

There is an agreed procedure with Derbyshire County Council and, therefore, South Derbyshire District Council, by which eligible Marina residents can get their Gold Card. You can apply by post or - which the majority of people do - in person at the South Derbyshire District Council offices in Civic Way, Swadlincote. You should complete the application form, take it, your photograph (or they can take that for you at the Office), the proof of age eligibility (driving licence, passport, medical card) and the proof that you are living in Derbyshire.

For this residency proof you need a "to whom it may concern" statement from the Marina Office that you (name and boat name) have a Residential Mooring (don't lose the original - it may be useful elsewhere). The Office will do your letter for you. The Marina statement is backed up with your electoral registration and, as it is a legal requirement to register on the electoral roll of the authority where you live, you should already have done this. You can take your letter of acceptance on the electoral role if you want but there's no need; South Derbyshire District Council staff can do the check on their system while you're there. Provided you are eligible, your form is in order, you are on the electoral roll and you have the documents as described, you will then be issued with a 5-year card.



### THE PIAZZA




The Piazza building work will begin in March. When completed, the new addition to The Boardwalk will house a restaurant, shops and additional office space. The Piazza will be built in a similar style and materials to The Boardwalk, which was named Britain's Best Small Commercial Building at the Grand Final of the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards 2015. It had previously been the overall winner of all categories at the East Midlands regional LABC event. The three-storey building will border the area surrounding the marina's unique five-sided bandstand. This means, of course, that for much of this year the Bandstand and the area around can't be used for events. But the Marina is exploring ways to keep the markets and busking going through the coming months, so do watch out for notices both on the Marina's Facebook page and poster displays around the Marina. And, before you ask, all the trees and plants, the willow arch and the water rill are being dismantled/removed very carefully and replaced/replanted in other areas of the Marina. Everything is being kept!!

### Bicycles

Do you have a bicycle on the Marina? If so, you need to get a yellow tag from the Office (this will have your fob number on it) and fix the tag to your bike. And you need to do this now! From the beginning of March, any bike without a yellow tag (excepting the Community Bikes, will be removed.

### Weather Station

The Met Office Weather Station will be installed in the 'dog walking' field on the 15th of March.



### Residential Boat Moves



Many pontoons have already organised their residential boat moves. Please remember that all residential boats need to have moved to their new mooring by **20 March 2017**

### March Events

**General Information**  
Everyone will be made very welcome at all events. If you need to sign up, the information about the event will say that and what to do. Events usually start at 7pm in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms. There is a £1 per person charge with the money all going to the marina's charities (the Marina Office subsidises the tea and coffee). Check for last minute reminders and any last minute changes on the Marina's Facebook page.  
Some events need signing up for in the Marina Office - like the quiz and the CPR evenings.  
If you have any questions or are not sure about anything, email the wonderful Mercia Activities Committee (MAC) at: [merciaevents@hotmail.com](mailto:merciaevents@hotmail.com)

**What a wonderful array of evening events.**  
**Over two-thirds of the March evenings have something going on.**



**Watercolour Class** Mondays 6, 13, 20, 27  
**Craft Group** Wednesdays 1, 14, 21  
**Ukulele Group** Thursdays 2, 9, 16, 23. 30  
**Music Group** Tuesday 7  
**Photography Group** Wednesday 8  
**Decorative Rope Work** Saturday 11  
**Bingo** Wednesday 15  
**Tillerettes** Saturday 18  
**Beetle Drive** Wednesday 22  
**Monthly Quiz** Wednesday 29  
**CPR Training** Saturday 25  
**Book Club** Tuesday 28




**?quiz?**



The next C.P.R. training session is on **Saturday 25th March @ 19.00hrs** in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms. Don't be the bystander. Be the rescuer - MINUTES COUNT!!!

Register now!!!!!!



**CALL PUSH RESCUE**

"I learnt CPR at work so when my son Jaden collapsed aged six I knew what to do. I kept going until the paramedics arrived. That's why our lovely son is still with us today."

Lifesaver **Ghayan Briggs** (42). Survivor **Jaden Briggs**.

Become a Lifesaver. Find out more by contacting your CPR lead.

**FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT**  
bhf.org.uk

### Golden Windlasses

The Mercia Forum unanimously gave their approval to the award of a Golden Windlass to Helen Deaville (The Willow Tea Rooms). The 8th of March is Helen's third Anniversary at the Tea Rooms and through all that time she has been hugely supportive of the Marina, lending her Tea Rooms for events, meetings, private parties and charity activities alongside managing a very busy tea rooms. She is wonderful to work with, always cheerful and positive and all her happy eaters think so too! A well-deserved award.



### Speed Limit Reminder

Some people - just a known few - are forgetting the 10mph rule. Which is a real pity because the Marina has no wish to ban any more drivers. Please watch your speed - particularly with it being lighter earlier and later so people are out and about for longer and we want to stay accident free!



Our thanks, as always, to Midland Chandlers for their support of the Newsletter. You can receive a copy via email if you ask in the Office. Hard copies are distributed around the Marina and the Office retains extra Copies.

