

Mercia Events During the Summer

Community Events are on a summer break. The Calendar for 2017/18 will be sent out at the end of July with most groups starting up in September. BUT CHECK! Your group may have a different plan so keep your eye on the Facebook Community page. This, and the Community Website (www.mercia.community) are being revamped a bit. You can also ask in the Office for information. Questions? Email merciaevents@hotmail.com



Don't forget - it's the ReXFactor again in September, so keep preparing your pooches And there's bound to be fancy dress, so get your sewing skills moving!



Sunday 2nd July 2:30 - 4:00
Tamarisk Parents Choir
Performing at Mercia Marina



Tamarisk will be collecting money for the charity Jessie's Fund, a UK based charity which provides music therapy for children in special schools, hospitals and hospices



A Very Special Day in London

Keith Griffiths writes: "Having worked as a Conservative political agent for more than 20 years and having supported and helped to raise funds for the Benevolent Fund, it was lovely and a privilege to be invited to 10 Downing Street to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Fund.

"Tuesday 21st June presented Pam and me with a few challenges. First tying the tie, after a good few years not having to wear one, it's a skill you forget! Secondly the heat was ferocious - hottest day for several years, and the underground which is partly terrifying, but also amazing.

"Having passed through that famous door, we walked to the back of the house and down steps to the garden, passing along the way portraits of past occupants and photos of cabinets, including that of Macmillan and Winston Churchill's War Cabinet.

"The rose garden is a little oasis of calm - on this occasion filled with gazebos and the perfume of roses.

"Guests were supporters of the Fund and agents - mostly now retired - welcomed by the Chairman of the Party Patrick McLoughlin, who told us of his visits to the Marina. Mercia Marina can now claim to be a topic of conversation at No. 10!

"I met several colleagues from the old days which was great, and of course the conclusion that we arrived at was, things aren't what they used to be! A day to remember, rounded off with fish and chips back on the boat. Really pleased to have the serenity of the Marina to which we could return."



For comments and contributions, please contact Jo—07973711431 or jojames46@gmail.com

Mercia Piscatorial Society



A new group has started on the Marina, thanks to an initiative from John Welch. Mercia has a lot of moorers who enjoy fishing and most summer evening see the back of boats well populated. So John Welch put a 'shout out' on the Marina's Community Facebook page and, following a healthy response, the Mercia Piscatorial Society held its first meeting in the Willow Tea Room in early June. The Society's intention is to promote responsible fishing, ensure rod licences are in place, share best practice and offer support and instruction to novices. The Society will also be looking at water quality and the health of the Marina's fish. There is a Closed Facebook Group - search for Mercia Piscatorial Society and ask to 'join'.

The Society has 20 members currently and these have experience varying from those who are total novices through to others with substantial experience. John is delighted that there is such a healthy interest in the Society - "fishing is not only about a person trying to catch fish it is also about conservation. We all play a part in looking after that environment. We should think before we tip something down the sink or decide to empty our bilges. Diesel is extremely harmful to the fish environment. When we use exfoliants, for example, the plastic micro balls don't break down; they get digested by the fish which then become ill from the toxins in the plastic.

"On the social side, we will have some matches put in place which should prove fun. There will be a £2 entry fee with the funds being split and going charity.

"If people would like to find out more, get involved and be a member of the Society, they can speak to me or Nigel Hunt (leave a message in the Office with your contact details) or join the Facebook Group and send a message through there.

"One of the Society members, Maurice Steeles, has offered to give some lectures on carp fishing and tag in some days out sea fishing and fly fishing which should be quite entertaining. So there will be a lot going on - come and join us."



Towpath Taskforce

Canal & River Trust's Towpath Taskforce are looking for volunteers to help with footpath maintenance and general tidying up. They will be at The Nadee Restaurant on 7th July 10am - 1pm and here at Mercia Marina on 21st July 10am - 1pm. If you are interested and would like to go along and lend a hand, please call Wayne Ball on 07766 577947.



Canal &
River Trust



Mooring Contracts

It's time for the renewals of Mooring Contract. These will be posted out at the beginning of July and there is an increase of 3.7% in line with the increase in the RPI. Boat paperwork (BSSC, Licence and Insurance) must be current - you'll get a nudge if they're not! Return renewed contract by the 21st of July to be entered in the prize draw with the winner getting a month's free mooring!

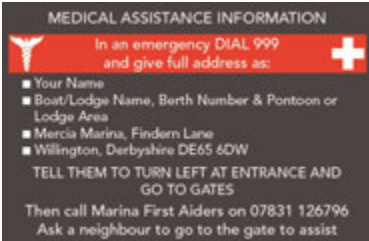
Many thanks to Midland Chandlers for continuing their support for our monthly Newsletter. Paper copies are available from the Marina shops or the Marina Office. Emailed copies are sent to anyone who asks in the Office.



Midland
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CANAL/BOAT EQUIPMENT SINCE 1979

Emergency Procedures

The Medical Assistance Information Cards are available from the Office for all moorers and lodge owners. Please collect as



many cards as you want and ensure they are put in good places around your boat or lodge so you can get them easily. And please read the instructions on the card - they will tell you exactly what

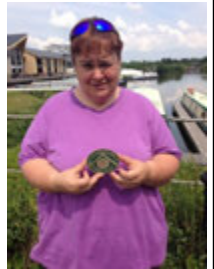
to do in an emergency. **Note the very bottom line:**

Ask a neighbour to go to the gate to assist

This means the green security gate. And take a entry fob with you. Ambulance crews know the marina layout and know to come to the green security gate. This is where they should be met, have the gate opened ready for them and be told where to go. They have maps and will know the mooring/lodge location where they are heading. Do not go to the marina's main or wooden gated entrances.

Golden Windlass

Sarah Cunnington is pictured here receiving her Golden Windlass which she received for her saving and assisting in the rescue of a moorer who had blacked out and fallen down a bank and into the water. Sarah went after him immediately and kept his head above water whilst summoning help.





Once upon a time there were a few fields between Willington and Findern Mercia Marina had its origins in 76 acres of farmland with gravel deposits. John and Michael Thornton bought the land in the 1980s and rented it to a local farmer who used them for cereals – mainly wheat – until the mid 1990s. Then, with the building of the A50, the gravel was extracted for the construction of the carriageway. The resultant workings were converted into a fishing lake which was stocked with trout. The perimeter of the lake was planted with native trees and some poplars. The Thornton’s land agent had suggested they look at connecting the Willington Lake (as it came to be called) with the canal and building a marina and, in the early 2000s, the serious planning for this began. Mercia Marina was opened in September 2008. Commercial development projects usually have landscaping as an afterthought with little or no planning for the encouragement of natural wildlife. We are fortunate to have a 76-acre site where, from the very beginning, there was a focus on its environmental health and development. The original surveys undertaken before the Marina was built found poor soil, poor grass, some trees, a few frog tadpoles and a toad, trout from the stocked fishing ponds, some common songbird species nesting within hedgerows, a common pipistrelle bat and a few wetland bird species. In other words – not much! Looking around now, it’s hard to believe our remarkable microsite is the same place.



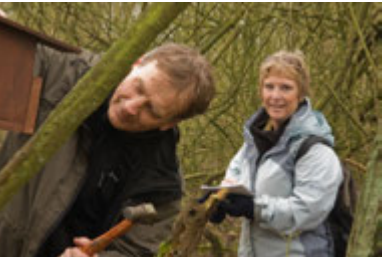
The leadership on the Estate development comes from John and Michael Thornton and Robert Neff. The expertise and responsibility for implementing the development comes from David Boddy alongside Stuart Reeves, Sven Osborne, Pete Keen, Dan Marks and Ryan Jarvis. Plus volunteers from across the Marina. Counting in my head, I can immediately name three dozen who have weeded, planted, cleared woodland areas, put up bird boxes, done surveys (night and day), photographed, monitored and maintained. Everyone has put in a huge amount of work over the last decade and the results are there for everyone to enjoy. The site has a variety of habitats – hedgerows, woodlands (including the little Bluebell Wood down by Facilities Block 3), the grasslands. the scrub and wildflower meadows and banks, the basin margins and open water with walkways and islands, and the pond in the South Field. Each area has its own plan so that flora and fauna can – ideally – thrive.



All of this has an impact on the timing and severity of the maintenance operations. While public area is kept neatly ‘groomed’, the habitats are dealt with differently. For instance, in the boaters’ area, hedges, thickets and shrubberies are not trimmed during the nesting season. Leaf litter is allowed to build up under various plantings to encourage insect populations which feed birds and amphibians. Areas of the wildflower banks and meadows are left standing,



until the autumn to provide food for birds. Grasses and water plants are cut back in rotation so there is always shelter and cover for - particularly - the water birds. As the birds, butterflies, dragon and damsel flies arrived in increasing numbers, we kept records. A monthly bird survey was done by the Wetland Trust for the RSPB, nestlings are ringed, night-time moth surveys were done and bat species were recorded and logged in the long warm summer evenings. Fungi are watched for during the Autumn, bird boxes are checked and renewed as needed and there is a continuous planting schedule with, now, a small orchard with old variety apple, pear and plum trees and planting raspberry and blackcurrant canes. The latest projects include creating a cottage garden by Facilities Block 2, starting a Bee Conservation Group (“Save Our Bees”) and a Small Mammal Group, establishing an official Met Office Weather Station and the beginning of the Mercia Piscatorial Society (more on this elsewhere in the Newsletter).

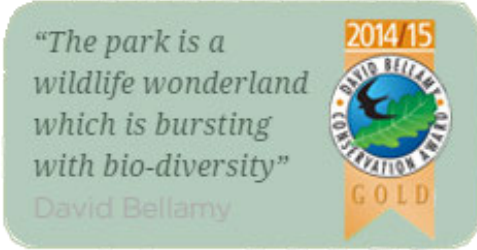


For all the impressive achievements over the last years, the estate will always be “work in progress”. So stop, look and listen as you walk about. Have you noticed the spectacular yellow water iris, the ‘blooming marvellous’ wildflower meadow by the little orchard, the huge range of songbird species with their nestlings now flying free. Enjoy what so many people are working hard to create and develop.

Ragwort Pulling



Photographs on the opposite page show ‘Willington Lake’, trees being moved by ‘Big John’, Stuart harrowing the wildflower meadow and volunteers with David Boddy planting, digging and clearing the island in South Field.



Off to enjoy the Dawn Chorus on 29th April 2017



The Cottage Garden - Redcurrants and a Bee Nest; the Herb Bed.



Large Skipper in the Cottage Garden



Wildflower Meadow in June 2017



Panorama Photography by Richard Triggs

