

# Mercia Mercury

## Cruising 2018

**SHARING YOUR KNOWLEDGE:** The cruising season is upon us. liveaboards and leisure moorers begin to head out in May - some for a couple or three weeks, others for a month or two and some not planning to be back at Mercia until the end of the summer. This time last year the weather was lovely (see left, us moored with friends at the bottom of Bosley Locks on the Macclesfield). Whatever it does this year doesn't really matter that much; being out on the boat is glorious in itself!



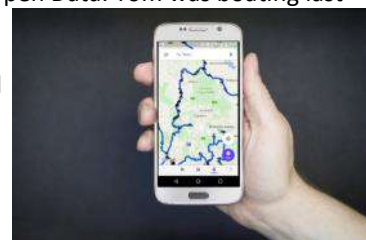
You may be planning a route you've not done before and it's worth taking some advice and asking around about moorings, shopping, things to look out for, etc. You will have either Nicholson's or Pearson's (or both!) with you but recent knowledge from our own boaters is hugely useful. Mercia Community Facebook page would be a good place to ask for tips and advice. Or just ask around near

your mooring. Another place for plenty of tips and advice is the online electronic towpath (Canal World Discussion Forum - [canalworld.net](http://canalworld.net)). Ask the question in the "Waterways Holidays" section or just read through the stories already there. And for those who are already very familiar with huge swathes of our inland waters, do be generous with your knowledge - share your notes scribbled in Nicholson's or a link to your cruising blog. It makes a big difference to know, particularly, good overnight moorings, great pubs, working services etc. And, indeed, what time it's advisable to get to certain moorings if you want to be reasonably certain of a spot!

**OPEN CANAL MAP:** A new development in maps is an electronic canal and rivers' map which is receiving a lot of praise and support. It has been developed by Tom Sapey and built originally using Canal and River Trust Open Data. Tom was boating last year and the pages he needed in Nicholson's were all stuck together, so he tried to navigate using the CRT website and Google maps. That didn't work particularly well so, on discovering the CRT open data website, Tom experimented with loading it into Google maps. He published it on some Facebook groups and the response was amazing so, since he was a programmer/web developer who has been a boater for 10 years, he reckoned there was something missing from the boating world.

Lots was missing from that original version but people were asked to contribute and suggest amendments, information that should be included etc. and now, twelve months' on, there is a more complex and complete map. Over 800 user generated markers have been added plus a couple of thousand from other websites who have contacted Tom offering him their data.

The android app came next which offers a faster interface and the iPhone app will follow later on this year. You can also explore it in a normal browser. Have a look at the website ([opencanalmap.uk](http://opencanalmap.uk)) and if you've an android phone, download the app so it's to hand when you're off cruising. It's a very promising new resource which Tom updates regularly in response to the suggestions he receives. Thank you, Tom, for spending so much time and giving, particularly the teckies amongst us, such a useful bit of kit. Do have a look at it and if, as you cruise, there are things you think could be added, then fill in the form and let Tom know.



**PRE-CRUISE CHECKLIST:** Some people are great believers in lists and even when going on holiday to the same place or going off, again, on their boat, grab the checklist just to make sure nothing's been forgotten. Nigel Hunt has his pre-cruise check



list which he's happy to share with us: 1) Check batteries (starter and domestic), make sure they're topped up and holding a charge; 2) Top up stern greaser tube; 3) Check hose and hose fittings; 4) Take spares (fan belts, grease for the stern greaser, engine and gearbox oil; 5) If you have a tall mooring chimney, swap it for the shorter cruising chimney; 6) Top up with water, diesel, fuel for the fire; 7) Check gas cylinders.

Next, in terms of things to take there's 1) windlasses and gloves; 2) lump hammer; 3) mooring stakes/chains; 4) BW key and handcuff key; 5) anchor, chain and rope (depending on where your cruise takes you; 6) sharp knife or Prop Mate for defouling prop. You will want to create your own list and there may well be an additional set

of requirements if you're heading for the Thames or cruising on or across other rivers.

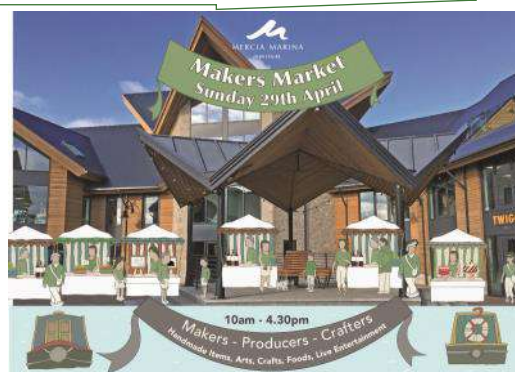
Finally, Nigel says remember to be careful about using power hungry appliances! Leave the microwave and kettle alone, don't use the washing machine or hair dryer unless the engine is running and has had a chance to recharge the batteries after a night stop. And if your freezer not full at times, fill the gaps with plastic containers or clean packets ... it will run more efficiently

### NATURE SOCIETY Making a real difference



Jane Wakeham led us through a fascinating talk about the Marina's abundant wildlife on

the 16th of March. Bees, birds, butterflies, badgers and small mammals aplenty. At a practical level, we prised apart owl pellets (see Jean and Wynne hard at work!) to discover tiny bits of skeleton to match up with diagrams of small mammals - a fascinating task! The Wildlife Group have a number of projects on the go - if you'd like to join them, Jane would be happy to hear from you.



## Community Events' Programme for 2018

The Events are also on the Mercia Community Facebook Page. If you can't find what you want, ask! Ask in the Office or ask your Forum Rep - there is plenty of help around. And it is very important you keep in touch with any last minute changes or arrangements for your group. Some events are popular, so it is important you say you want to come in good time. Most events are in The Willow Tea Rooms (thanks to Helen Deaville) and usually start at 7pm.

### ----- APRIL DIARY -----



Tues	3	Music
Thurs	5	Ukulele
Sat	7	Decorative Rope Work
Mon	9	Watercolour
Wed	11	Photography
Thurs	12	Ukulele
Sat	14	New & Used Open Day
Sat	14	Decorative Rope Work
Mon	16	Watercolour
Wed	18	Bingo
Thurs	19	Ukulele
Mon	23	Watercolour
Tues	24	Book Club
Thurs	26	Ukulele
Frid	27	First Aid Friday ("Double Your Discount" event)
Mon	30	Watercolour



## Mercia Marina Photography Competition



Mercia Marina has a photography competition every month. If you've got a photograph taken at the Marina which you think is pretty good, then send it in to [tony@merciamarina.co.uk](mailto:tony@merciamarina.co.uk). The winner (or winners) each month can choose from a box of chocolates or a bottle of Prosecco. All the photographs submitted are put on the Marina's Facebook page so everyone has the chance to see what's being entered. Winners from February were Sylvia Lamb Moore, Rachel Taylor-Eaton and Sue Jordan with their photographs of the sculpture in the wildlife field, the new piazza and a study in still life on a boat. Congratulations to each of them and, with spring and summer round the corner, there should be many opportunities to get the camera out.



## Decorative Rope Work

### Willow Tree Tea Rooms

**Saturday 7 April and Saturday 14 April at 7.00 p.m.**

Nigel Hunt will be demonstrating and then taking you through the



beginnings of decorative rope work. Whenever the evenings were held in the last couple of years, they proved very popular indeed, so please sign up in the Office to ensure your place. Some moorers were bitten by the rope bug after just one session

and went on to become hugely proficient - making fenders both for themselves and responding to requests from others. So you may find yourself with a new hobby!! You'll be provided with all necessary materials and you will be able to proceed at your own pace. There will be a charge of no more than £2 to cover the cost of the materials as well as the usual contribution of £1 which goes to the Marina charities. Coffee and tea will be provided as always.

## Midland Changers

Thanks to Midland Changers, as always, for their support for the Newsletter, printing the hard copies and having them carried to the Marina in their van. And they have now added a new contribution to the Marina called -

### "Double Your Discount"

The Marina puts on a number of specific talks and events which it believes are of particularly importance - those, for example, on health and safety issues, fire prevention, good boat maintenance and having moorers welcomed into the community when they arrive. To encourage your attendance at those events, there is now an incentive! Individual discount vouchers will be given to the moorers or lodge owners attending. The vouchers can then be used for a 15% discount against the purchase of any item/s at Midland Changers. They will be valid for one month and can only be used once. The first **Double Your Discount** talk (and these will always be announced in advance) is First Aid Friday on Friday 27 April. Sign up in the

Office and a second big thank you is due to Midland Changers!

**FIRST AID  
FRIDAYS**



## Marina Pontoon Party and 10th Anniversary Celebrations!



We've had some wonderful Marina-wide events over the years and there are two on the way which will add to our colourful history.

The first will be on **Sunday 20th May** - our version of a Street Party to celebrate the Royal Wedding. The plan is that you all get together as pontoons, decide on what picnic type food you want to make and then share it with your friends and neighbours. A Community Fuddle for all to enjoy. Forum Reps will be round to discuss it with you soon. The MAC group need to know by early April how many will be attending so that there are tables and chairs etc. for the right number. It will be held around Facilities Block 2.

The second event (or events) will be over **the weekend of 15th & 16th September** and this is to celebrate Mercia Marina's 10th Anniversary (which is the week before on 8th September).



**MERCIA MARINA**  
WILLINGTON

**Bandstand Busk**  
Sunday 15th April  
12.30pm - 3.30pm

**Bandstand Busk**  
Featuring **Moore & Moore Beer**

**BACK ON THE BANDSTAND**

Get the 2018 busking season well underway with the return of the Bandstand Busk  
Enjoy the performers by the Piazza at Mercia - Free Event

*more than just an*  
**OPEN DAY**

Mercia Marina  
Sat 14th April - 10am-4pm

*Don't miss it!*

Join us for an unmissable day at our Mercia Marina Sales Office for:

<b>HELP &amp; ADVICE</b> Our friendly and knowledgeable team are on hand and happy to help with advice on all things connected to canal boating as well as explaining all there is to know about our New Boat Ranges featuring Sailaways, Narrowbeams & Widebeams Unbeatable Brokerage Selection Refreshments also available	<b>TALKS BY GUEST SPEAKERS</b> Living on a boat RBOA (Residential Boat Owner's Association) The role of the surveyor in buying a second hand boat John Jones Which boat is right for you Mark Langley PLUS: An opportunity to have a personal chat with a boat builder	<b>SPECIAL OFFERS</b> FREE Bow thruster* on all orders taken on the day (worth up to £3500) Free RYA helm course on the first two deposits of the day <small>*On fully fitted boats only, subject to terms and conditions.</small>
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THE NEW & USED BOAT CO.

On Saturday 15th there will be a Moorers and Lodge Owners' Party in the private areas with hog roast plus BBQ, music and more.

On Sunday 16th there will be celebrations in the public areas with stalls, circus performers/street artists such as stilt walkers and fire performers, fireworks and much more.

Further details on both events to come but, in the meantime .....

**#SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

## Mercia Swan - Canal Daily Boat Trips from Mercia Marina



The Mercia Swan canal boat is based at Mercia Marina Willington. The 2018 cruising season starts on Friday 30th March. There is a regular return service ( unless prior booked for private charter ) from Mercia Marina to the local village of Willington or alternatively a longer trip to Stenson Lock in the opposite direction, where you can refresh yourself with a drink at the Stenson Bubble Inn or maybe tea and cake at the Stenson Lock Cafe. Join the Mercia Swan for a leisurely cruise along the picturesque Trent and Mersey canal and escape for a while from the hurly burly of our modern day hectic lifestyle. The Mercia Swan is licensed for up to 12 passengers and can be booked for a special charter - a particular celebration, a works' outing or family event. For all details of sailings, bookings and prices for a private charter, please see the web-site [www.merciaswan.co.uk](http://www.merciaswan.co.uk) or phone 07398 821650.

## Willow Tree Tea Rooms & The Butcher Baker/The Beetroot Tree



Steven and Tracey McKendrick opened *The Butcher Baker* on The Boardwalk almost four years ago, just a couple of months after Helen (Heg) Deaville took over the *Willow Tree Tea Rooms*. The two businesses have worked happily side-by-side ever since then, but now things have changed. Steven and Tracey have decided to simplify their working lives and concentrate solely on their Barton Marina *Butcher Baker and Ice Cream Maker* at almost exactly the time Heg and her husband Richard were looking at ways they might expand. With Steven and Tracey having established, and now offering, a successful and thriving business on The Boardwalk, it was a happy coincidence all round. So, at the end of trading on the 26th of March, Heg and Richard took over *The Butcher Baker*. But there will be little change - the Farm Shop and Deli will continue, the Menu will continue,

the staff will continue. Heg will replace Tracey and the name will change to *The Beetroot Tree*. The *Willow Tree Tea Room* stays the same in every respect.

Tracey says the last four years have been a delight. She and Steven have enjoyed their time here, the people are wonderful and the environment just lovely. She's happy to be handing over to Heg - someone who is thoroughly used to the Marina, the huge busy-ness of it and certainly no newcomer to it all. We wish Steven and Tracey all the best for the future and many of us will continue to see them when we pop into Barton Marina by boat, bike or car for one thing or another!

For Heg, it's going to be a whole lot more work but Richard is technically retiring and will come and work alongside her, looking after maintenance and the office-based administration. Heg said, with a grin, "we were looking at expansion as something to do in the future. Well, it seems the future is NOW". We wish both of them all the best for their future also and will enjoy visiting, shopping, eating and drinking at both *The Willow Tree Tea Rooms* and *The Beetroot Tree*.



## Mercia Piscatorial Society

The Mercia Piscatorial Society held their AGM on the 25th of March 2017. The well-attended meeting applauded as the prizes were handed out for 1) League Winner (Nigel Hunt); 2) Best Pike in Match (Ian Carroll); 3) Biggest

Carp (Nigel Hunt); 4) Best Predator (Peter Bentley Hicks) .

We held an auction of Neil Wakeham's fishing tackle who sadly passed away last year and raised over £300 towards a charity nominated by Jane Wakeham. A full list of Match dates and new rules agreed by the Committee were also given out. We have

again maintained our head count for membership so all in all a good outcome for 2017 and let's see what 2018 will bring.

