



OVERGROWN WITH POTENTIAL!



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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the August edition of the Western Park Gazette.

This month, the controversy over the proposed sale of the derelict buildings on Western Park rumbles on. Local people have held meetings and put forward ideas to save the buildings for community use.

There are plans afoot to hold a Winter Festival in Braunstone Gate at the end of November, West end singing sisters Mia and The Moon prepare to tackle the New York music scene, Helen Knott discovers the delights of Pokémon Go! and Upstairs At The Western kicks off their new season.

Roger Blackmore looks back on the career of legendary gardener, Capability Brown, our own green god, Tony Huxley, defies a shaky French internet connection to send over his advice about keeping your pot plants healthy and Andy Stevens returns to Hinckley Road Policing Unit with his latest local update.

And there's the chance to win a gallon and a half of real ale from the West End Brewery.

Finally, the Sudoku and crossword lie in wait on the inside back page.

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To Contact - Call **07939 115 724**
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Events Diary

Pub Quiz: Monthly last Tues. WE Brewery Braunstone Gate. 8-10pm.

Peter Crebbin's Cool Swing Band: 1st Sun Monthly. Café Chino at Hilton Hotel, Meridian. 1-3.30pm

Thursday Club: Thursdays. 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narborough Rd.

West End Pay As You Feel Café: Thurs 7-8.30pm. Tues, Fri & Sat 11-3pm. WE Centre. Andrewes St.

Heritage Sundays: Monthly last Sun. Mediaeval city open days/tours. 11-3pm. goleicestershire.com

Westfield Gallery: Mon-Sat. 81 Westfield Rd. Call 0116 285 8548 to view.

Western Park Beer Festival: 19-20th Aug. Dove-lands Sch. westernparkbeerfestival.org

City Festival: 19-29th August. Various events & venues. Info at: www.visitleicester.info/cityfestival

Rights of Summer Ceilidh: 25 Aug. Guildhall. 7pm. Tickets from Visit Leicester.

Nicholas Nickleby: 26 Aug. Guildhall. Tickets from Visit Leicester.

Leic Sky Ride: 28 Aug. 10-4pm. goskyride.com

Old Town Festival: Jubilee Sq. 29 Aug. 11-5pm

Hamlet: 29 Aug. Jewry Wall. Tickets from Visit Leic.

Mediaeval Family Day: 29 Aug. Guildhall. 11-3pm.

W.E Brewery Beer Festival: 1-4 Sept.

Seaside Steam Day: 4 Sept. 12-5pm. Free Entry.

Garden: 9-10 Sept. Upstairs At The Western. www.upstairs@thewestern.com

Undermined: 16 Sept. Upstairs At The Western.

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Western Park residents are waiting to hear the fate of a 5-acre site on Western Park which has been put up for sale for residential development.

The freehold to the land, including the Grade II listed Western Park Open School, was offered to bidders and had a closing date of August 5th.

Residents, angry at the sale of the site, which includes the only council owned community buildings in the Western ward, have held several meetings including one with City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, to express their frustration at a process they say has gone ahead without any consultation by local councillors or by the council - and which risks losing valuable green space in a city park.

The meeting heard that local groups and companies have put together proposals for all of the buildings. The Western Park Freeriders would like to use the Eco House, Western Park Beer Festival organisers want a community pub and rooms in the Constance Jackson Centre (Mencap building), Chrysalis Education propose to use the old Environ offices as an education facility for children with complex behavioural needs. Residents had come up, at short notice, with a number of ideas for using the school buildings.

Sir Peter Soulsby promised he would report back to residents in September when he had looked at

any bids that had been submitted. He said they expected any proposals to come in closer to the deadline.

"What you have is my commitment. Before I sign up to anything at all, I would come back and talk to you. Even if we do get something credible we don't have to accept it and I am committing this evening to coming back and talking to you".

"As I understand it, there is no obligation on me to take a bid because a bid has come in and it's a proposal with credibility. We haven't said this is what it's worth and any bid where that is a credible bid will get it."

"I would just stress I don't want to be discouraging but I have had, over the years, quite a lot of ideas put to me and sometimes they have been made to happen; one such project was the Eco House.

"We have also had others that sounded like realistic proposals and never managed to get the capital together.

"We will need to be sure whatever we do has a realistic prospect to getting the capital together."



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CAPABILITY BROWN

Born in 1716, exactly three hundred years ago in Northumberland, Lancelot Brown was to become probably the most famous British landscape architect of all time.

The fifth child of a chambermaid and a land agent, he grew up to become apprenticed as a gardener. He began to show particular flair when working for Lord Cobham at Stow in Buckinghamshire, where his mentor was the well known designer, William Kent.

In his time Lancelot "Capability" Brown went on to design or contribute to some 200 gardens up and down England and Wales including some famous work here in Leicestershire. He gained his nickname because of his habit of stating that he could see considerable "capability" in the various projects he planned to undertake.

Interestingly, whilst his first major work was at Croome Court in Worcestershire, which now in the care of the National Trust, his last great work was here in Leicestershire; the detailed plans for which have only recently been rediscovered.

Brown's work was characterised by sweeping vistas, canalised waterways and often a complete re-modelling of the landscape. Readers may have seen some of his most famous work in the gardens of Blenheim Palace, Chatsworth or Burghley near

Stamford. This he latter worked on from 1754 until his death in 1783.

Happily the complete designs for his last great work have recently been rediscovered at Belvoir Castle. (They had been presumed lost in a fire in the 19th century.) Here he planned one of his grandest and most extensive landscapes, tours of which are being widely offered in this his tercentenary year.

We do not know exactly how many gardens Brown worked on in his life. He was not good at keeping records of where he worked but attempts are being made to compile as comprehensive a list as possible of his schemes.

Locally, apart from Belvoir Castle, Stapleford near Melton Mowbray is now a hotel. A deer park had been established around the house in the seventeenth century. Capability Brown was called in to modify and alter the landscape to broadly as we see it today. Combe Abbey just over the Warwickshire border is another of his landscapes.

Brown always fancied himself as an architect but it is his landscapes that have endured over time. His imprint is to be seen today in countless locations up and down the country.

Roger Blackmore



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KNOTT'S LANDING

Very little in this world can persuade my little one to get up from the computer and move around in the open air. He usually has to be forced off the sofa with a crowbar and bribed with such joys as playing tennis with me, ice-cream, meeting friends and any activity that involves spending my money. So I experienced a deep seated joy recently when he actually came up to me and asked to be taken to the park. Why would he do this? Pokemon Go! of course. He wanted to wander around holding my phone in his hands finding wee beasties amongst the foliage of Western Park and frankly I wasn't going to stand in his way, firstly because this is the first time in years he's asked to go to the park and secondly because I want him to enjoy the park before the bulldozers move in and they build houses all over it.

Off we trooped to the park and it quickly became apparent that loads of other people are out playing this game too. We met a couple of blokes who



were self confessed nerds playing both Pokemon Go and its forerunner Ingress. I learned through actual human communication with said nerds that the Ingress players set up the game (think Capture the Flag with historical buildings) by nominating locations. They basically set up all the Pokestops and Gyms. A Pokestop is a place you can grab goodies to help you on your quest to catch Pokemon beasties and learn a little about your local environment. A Gym is a place to do battle with your high point Pokemon, win, plant your flag and hold it against all comers. (Still with me? No, don't worry, I'm not really sure either!)

We wandered around aimlessly looking for critters and hoovering up all the Pokestop goodies we could find and suddenly the phone bongled and we'd managed to hatch an egg by walking two kilometres! Little dude was beside himself with excitement. He went home that night very tired and happy. He's asked to go to the park every day since.

If that's video games these days, I'm in. Whichever evil genius nerd invented this craze deserves a medal. Thinking about it, it was probably a developer Dad who needed to get his kid off the sofa!

Helen Knott



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New York-New York!

The awesomely talented West Leicester singing sisters Mia and The Moon are packing their bags and heading to the Big Apple!

Mary-Anne and Laura Ratcliffe have been busily gigging across the UK after releasing their first album and now they're trying their luck in New York for 10 days in September with just their guitars.

Laura said: "It'll be really inspiring! We're staying in a music commune for a few nights and appearing at Rockwood's Music Hall and a few other places and networking as much as possible".

Mary-Anne chipped in: "We hope to meet a lot of American musicians... And I'm really looking forward to my first trip on the New York subway!"

The girls are currently putting the finishing touches to their next album with a taster single and video due for release.

Catch up with their Big Apple adventures on Facebook or at www.miaandthemoon.com



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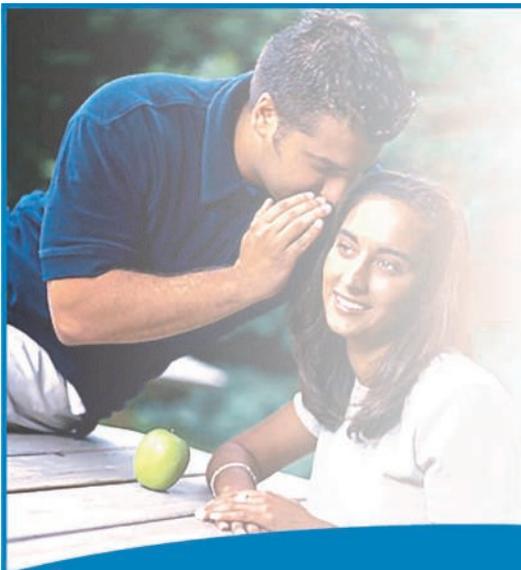
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Upstairs At The Western

This September, we can't quite believe it but we'll begin our ninth season of performances at Upstairs at the Western. Thank you so much to everyone who has supported us to get this far, but please keep coming to see shows when you can; we are volunteer-led and run and receive no regular funding (but plenty of regular bills!).

So, what's on this season? Royalty pays a visit with Dawn State Theatre Company's critically-acclaimed *The Man Who Would Be King*...



The Man Who Would Be King

And a one-woman interpretation of *Richard III*.

The kings and queens of the spoken word scene are also making an appearance, some as part of Leicester's wonderful Everybody's Reading festival. We also have former UK slam champion Ben

Norris with his show *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Family* and acclaimed writer Sabrina Mahfouz's *Layla's Room*.

Why not get involved on stage yourself? Our popular stand up comedy workshops return, now in their fourth season. They run throughout September until the 2nd October culminating in a special performance night.

We're delighted to welcome local folk legend Grace Petrie with the *Fire in Your Heart Folk Night*, a new, regular monthly folk show including headliners and open mic slots. Jess Green and Toby Campion return with *Find the Right Words*, their regular monthly spoken word show with ten open mic slots.

Tickets for all shows are available now to book online at: www.upstairsatthewestern.com or over the bar at The Western.



Richard III



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Winter Westival!

Winter Westival 2016 is confirmed! Over the weekend of 26th/27th November Braunstone Gate will be welcoming all to come and enjoy a wintery wonderland of music, craft stalls, hot spiced drinks, and much more!

Local residents and street users have got together to organise the road's first winter festival, which will be riding on the success of the two summer Westivals. The group is supported by charity Sustrans's Braunstone Gate Places for People community street design project, funded by Leicester City Council and The People's Health Trust. Many local businesses, Natterjacks, The West End Brewery, and more are supporting the event with organising, sponsorship and putting on entertainment over the weekend – so it's a whole street effort!



Through the Braunstone Gate Places for People project, many people have expressed that as well as physical improvements to the street, they would love to see more street festivals that 'bring the community together', and that 'help us get to know our neighbours and feel safe'. Others feel that a street festival could help attract more people to the street which will keep the businesses thriving.

The plans in the pipeline are for the Saturday night special music and entertainment in many of the venues, and on the Sunday the road will be closed to traffic to make space for the Christmas and winter themed fayre.

There is plenty to do in the run up, so if you fancy helping out come along to the next organising meeting on Thursday 25th August, 5.30 – 7pm at the Tescos community room. For more information search for Braunstone Gate Places For People on Facebook or call Charlotte Jones on 0116 454 0186 / 07855 324 208.



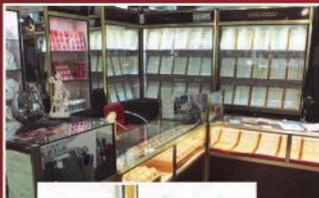
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Aug Police Update

As highlighted by Sgt Andy Stevens in the last issue of the Gazette, I have returned to Hinckley Road Police Station as the Dedicated Neighbourhood Team (DNT) Sergeant for the Fosse Ward. This covers the area of Fosse Road North and the surrounding sides of Newfoundpool and Tudor Road estate.

Following the boundary changes, it has incorporated the old parts of the Western Park ward, which consisted of the streets bordered by King Richards Road and Glenfield Road. The other side of the old Western Park has been incorporated by the Western Ward DNT under the reign of Sgt Simon Walters.

Regardless of the team, you can still contact the police in an emergency on 999 and in a non-emergency on 101. If you utilise our website at www.leics.police.uk, you'll be able to access all the latest news and details of your Local Policing units.

To update Sgt Stevens, we are still being made aware of incidents of break-ins to vehicles and encourage all drivers to remove valuables from vehicles and not leave anything on show. This will only encourage thieves who may be in the area to target your vehicle. As per our mantra "Leave it on show, expect it to go", we have continued patrolling the areas that have been targeted in order to catch those responsible and it will always help for members of the public who see suspicious activity to call us to report it.

The most significant development to mention is the recent increase in fires at local abandoned factories. There have been incidents on a number of streets throughout the Fosse Ward and the Abbey Ward. We are working with both the Fire Service and the Local City Council in



order to reduce the risk to premises and to assist in the investigation of any incidents we suspect to be deliberate arsons. We have conducted undercover patrols and high visibility patrols to combat this. Anyone with any information with regard to who may be responsible for these fires is encouraged to contact us, as we want to prevent any further fires.

Mike Hooper

To find out about your local Beat Surgery look for the 'Local Policing' page at: <https://leics.police.uk>

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



My neighbours purchased a lovely pair of lollipop bay trees the other week. They stood in little faux lead pots either side of their front door, creating extra kerb appeal. Now they look like kindling. If you rubbed the stems together you'd start a fire.

Each summer we waste millions buying expensive outdoor pot plants that won't survive beyond the Autumn. With just a little forethought most of these losses could be avoided. When you buy any pot plant you have to remember it's like having a caged pet, without your intervention it will soon perish.

The smaller the pot, the less water it can hold, so the more it needs watering (obvious really), maybe twice daily in hot weather. Small pots are also more easily blown over. Rain alone is rarely sufficient to water a dried out pot plant, even if they're upright, so don't expect nature to do your dirty work. Generally speaking bigger pots, easier care, longer life.

If the soil has dried out don't rely a quick sprinkling to do the trick. Desiccated soil is hard to rehydrate. The best method is to submerge the

pot in a large bucket of water until it is thoroughly soaked.

Soil type can make a big difference. I prefer loam-based composts (or I add some good quality topsoil). This is heavier than regular potting compost making the plant less likely to topple over. Some composts have special wetting agents. You can also add water-retaining gels or crystals, but some could be potential pollutants as they don't degrade in the environment.



Water retaining gels

It's not just heat that increases water demand. Putting the plant in a windy spot will increase transpiration and therefore water loss. Moving the plant to a sheltered spot or giving it a windbreak will help.

If you going away, there are effective timed watering systems that will keep your botanical pets in good health. Personally I find a bottle of plonk is enough enticement to get my neighbours to do the job. Of course there's one set of neighbours I probably won't be asking this year.

Tony Huxley



Martin Page

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		4		6		8
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