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Eco House Fire Deliberate

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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the August edition of the **Western Park Gazette**. It's an ongoing struggle to fill the Gazette with "interesting" editorial. It's a bigger hassle in the summer when everyone's hopped off on their hols, but now the clouds have returned and liquid sunshine replaces the hotter type and things are appearing in our email box.

First up; knuckle-draggers with matches tried to burn down the Eco House on Western Park and the police get it in the ear from locals over the sale of the Hinckley Road station. Gimson Road has it's own high-tec way of dealing with potential crime, all down, they say, to a lack of police response to local crime and Local businessman Steve Dayman and family went on the Three Peaks Challenge raising £4000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

In our regular features, Helen Knott is after some peace and quiet, Roger Blackmore remembers Hinckley Road as it used to be, Spencer Dyer updates us on the police's activity and the Green Goblin, Tony Huxley, says it's not rained nearly enough to fix our gardens.

But if you just want to get annoyed, try the Sudoku and Crossword on the back page.

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Events Diary

Fosse Co-op Camera Club: Fri. St Peter's Ch Centre, Westholme St. 7.30pm. fossecoopcameraclub.co.uk

Free Thurs Club: 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narb' Rd.

Pub Quiz: Monthly - last Tues. WE Brewery.

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

Coffee Mornings: Fridays 10-12 noon. St Anne's Hall.

Walking Group: Sundays. 2pm. 96 Deg. B-Gate.

May The Toys Be With You: Until - 28th Oct. New Walk Museum & Art Gallery.

Free Children's Art Club: Saturdays 10.30-12.00. Fosse Neighbourhood Centre. Mantle Rd.

Heritage Sunday Tours. Last Sun of the month until Oct. 11am Tickets. Contact Visit Leicester.

Dru Yoga Sessions with Emma: From 2nd Sept. St Anne's Hall. 07393 811150.

Upstairs at the Western: **Rob Barrett Comic Poet** - 1st Sept, **Shannan Mitchener** - 5th Sept, **Film**

Noir Night - 6th Sept, **Uncle Amando** - 12th Sept.

Curve Theatre: **The Play That Goes Wrong** - 3-8th Sept, **Definitive Rat Pack** - 15th Sept **Evening with Pam Ayres** - 18th Sept.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: 11-15 Sept. Haymkt Th.

Blithe Spirit: 10-15th Sept. Little Th.

Y Theatre: **Robson** - 31st Aug, **Guns n' Roses** - 1st Sept, **Curly Strings Festival** - 7th Sept.

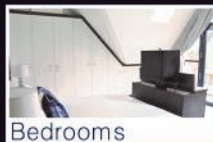
WP Beer Fest: St Anne's Hall, Fri Sept 14th - 5pm to midnight. Sat Sept 15th - Noon to 5pm & 6pm till Midnight.

HOLMFIELDS

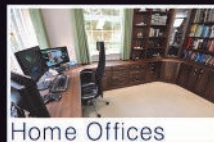
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ECO HOUSE ARSON

Once the centrepiece of Leicester's environmental and recycling ambitions; the disused Eco House on Western Park has been badly damaged in an arson attack.

Smoke was seen coming from the building in Western Park on Hinckley Road at around 9 in the evening on Sunday 29th of July.



Fire-fighters took an hour to put out the blaze which was confined to the first floor. They were joined by police, ambulance and air ambulance due to fears that people could be inside. No-one was found following a search but the damage to

the building makes it even more unsafe. Investigators concluded that the fire was deliberately started.

The Eco House will be part of a local project to renovate the park buildings for community use. Anna McAuly from the Western Ward Community Enterprise said: "We're deeply worried for the state of the Eco House and the unfortunate inevitability that an accident will happen in addition to further deterioration. The damage doesn't seem to be structural but we have been advised that the damage is to the floor and ceiling with fire damage to the ground floor and smoke damage to the first floor. How this will affect our plans, we aren't sure at present, however, the more damage the building undergoes, the more potential there is that we will need to raise more money. We're currently waiting on the council to exchange contracts with Parmer Properties so we can go full steam ahead with national funding streams".



Look for Western Ward Community Enterprise on Facebook & Twitter or at <https://www.wce.org.uk>

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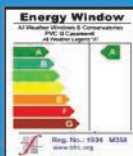
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BUY-GONE AGE

Many of us have been both saddened and shocked by the recent closure of iconic stores in the centre of Leicester. British Home Stores, Fenwicks and House of Fraser are the biggest casualties amidst mounting reports of a crisis in Britain's High Streets.

Western Parker and Westcotes residents, those of us with long enough memories, must also reflect on the many changes which have occurred in and around the Hinckley Road Parade of shops over the post war period. From traditional old school shopping to modern delis and fast food outlets - much has changed.

Often the most fondly remembered shop was Skerrits hardware store with the iron man a familiar sight to all who visited the Parade.

Amongst the recognisable people of past years was the late John Preston who worked in one of the two local butcher's shops and whose funeral at Narborough was attended by scores of local customers. John was a popular character and a keen City fan.



The Three Sisters clothes shop was a favourite here, as it was in a number of city shopping precincts, and we also has a delightfully old fashioned wool shop in our parade.

Several banks happily served the public in the time before branch closures became the order of the day with Barclays occupying a prime site by the junction with Woodville Road. Further up the Hinckley Road were the Midland Bank and the TSB.

Readers will have many individual memories of Tansleys hairdresser's salon, the former Boots the chemist, the cycle repair shop opposite and the cavern of delights that was Optimus on Kirby Road.

Over the years the Hinckley Road has become a favourite location for fast food outlets and Eastern European delicatessens, so replacing earlier grocers and greengrocers.

Today's mix of shops reflects a range of changes in the retail business. Local residents still have their favourite shopping haunts and the Post Office remains, despite the closure of Henley Road and the branch further down Hinckley Road. Mr Hindocha is a jovial postmaster handling a range of business from foreign currency to vehicle licensing.

This is not a comprehensive list of bygone shops and let us hope that the recent tragic event on the Parade does not damage trade in this local shopping area, so popular with many readers of the Gazette.

Roger Blackmore

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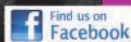
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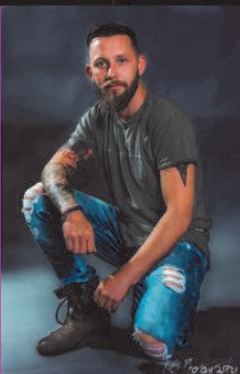
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KNOTT'S LANDING

The A47, Hinckley Road, needs to be shut immediately. Traffic can be re-routed via Narborough Road and Abbey Lane and it needs to happen now. We need to protest, build barricades, lay down in the roads. Whatever it takes! We have seen what is possible over a few weeks ago and a little bit of peace is a marvelous thing! No cars, no through traffic, no sirens, no buses, no accelerating motorcycles with ridiculous exhaust systems, no shouting people. It was lovely. It isn't even that quiet on Christmas Day. Waking up without the thunder of traffic and going to sleep without the near constant wail of sirens was bliss. We actually relaxed a bit in our own home. You don't realise that you aren't relaxed until you find yourself suddenly letting go.

One set of roadworks on Shoulder of Mutton Hill, just up from chard shard of the Eco house, and we were suddenly plunged into a different world. Look I know I live in a city and this stuff comes with it but the traffic through our little residential bit of the city is insane. Constant lorries, who have ring roads and lots of options other than through here, buses which don't stop here and we can't get onto if they do, cars just trucking through. The most entertaining thing was watching the sheer number

of cars who drove around the SIX road closed signs to discover that the road was indeed closed! Doh! If you are that stupid I do wonder if you should be in charge of a vehicle. The Eddie Stobart driver who had to turn around has no excuses. He needs to have a long hard look at himself.

But seriously, we need to talk about traffic because they are building 4000 houses out at LFE and all those people are going to drive into town, too fast in their polluting cars, down our lovely road and not even think about the fact that people actually live here. The air pollution levels for this area are not good. Leicester is in the 30 most polluted cities in the UK. The particulates, those black edges all round your carpets, cause heart disease, stroke and lung problems. The World Health Organisation (WHO) sets air pollution limits of 10 micrograms per cubic metre. In Leicester it's 12. People die at those levels. Thanks to the road closure we've seen what's possible. The city survived not having the A47 running through it for a week. Maybe it should think about surviving a bit longer! I'm ready to start the campaign - who's in?



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Western Park Traffic Action Group Speeding & overtaking

We are all getting quite fed up with the speeding and increasing amounts of over and undertaking on Hinckley and Glenfield Roads. If you are too, you can register your concerns and frustration on the following website - www.speedorsafety.com - use the community tab to locate the place to report concerns. In theory the police and road safety team take some notice - the website explains it.

20mph scheme

We were hoping to have a substantial update on this, perhaps for the next edition. We are starting to see some of the information from the traffic monitoring that Arcadis Consultants, appointed by Leicester City Council, have undertaken in this area. So work is ongoing - even if it is a little slower than we wanted it to be. **Keep in touch - email:** westernparktag@gmail.com



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ON STAGE IN AUTUMN

Curve

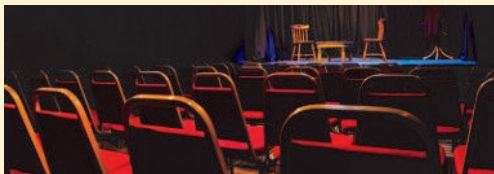
Leicester's award winning theatre has a myriad of shows on between now and Christmas. Curve Youth Theatre's latest production is Fiddler on The Roof (10-19 August). Another original Curve production is Memoirs of an Asian Football Casual (26 Sept – 6 Oct). As usual there are a brace of shows for the Christmas period. This year is Made at Curve's White Christmas (6 Dec – 13 Jan) and also Made at Curve's Dr Seuss's The Cat in The Hat (8 Dec – 12 Jan). Coming up we are also blessed with being the first stop on the national tour of Les Miserables (3-24 Nov) and a stopoff for Cilla, the Musical (9-13 Oct). Inbetween there are loads of one nighters and several touring shows.

Full details of all shows can be found at www.curveonline.co.uk/whats-on

Upstairs @ The Western

Upstairs's autumn season is proving to be another packed schedule of old favourites and new productions. Monthly treats are once again Film Noir (taking over from the popular Silent Cinema nights), Uncle Armando, Find The Right Words, Drag Queen Bingo, Choir Night and the ever popular Comedy Workshop. Levered in the gaps between the regular nights are a wide variety of poetry, plays and standup comedy.

Full details can be found at www.upstairsatthewestern.com/whats-on



The Little Theatre

Again this wonderful home to Leicester amateur theatre has a full programme of visiting and home grown shows for the autumn. Among the delights in store are Blithe Spirit, Cats, Little Shop of Horrors, Spamalot and the LDS annual pantomime, this year Mother Goose. Full details at www.thelittletheatre.net/whats-on

Haymarket Theatre

Since reopening earlier this year this hidden gem has contented itself with a wide variety of corporate events and one-nighters. But this autumn they are expanding their appeal and staging a couple of shows that run. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang is the annual offering from LAOS (11-15th Sept) and Treasure Island adapted by Sandi & Jennifer Toksvig (13 Dec – 6 Jan), the Haymarket's first home grown production

Full details at <https://haytheatre.com/whats-on>

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Fed up with a spate of crime on their street West Leicester residents have banded together to help make their neighbourhood safer using new technology...

WhatsApp Gimson Road?

Neighbours in a residential road in Western Park are trailing a new high-tech form of Neighbourhood Watch proving that smart phones have more uses than just Twitter.

Gimson Road residents have set up a WhatsApp Security Group for the street. This is a Facebook owned messaging service which uses mobile or fixed internet to send texts, pictures and video. It means neighbours can instantly communicate issues of concern with each other and share any security camera footage across their own private network.

The benefits include sharing of information and concerns about security incidents on the street, knowing that other people are keeping an eye on your property while you're away and being able to read posts about what's happening if you are away from home as well. This brings the whole community together; being able to involve and reassure older residents, who live alone, that there is a network of support and help out there.

The hope, in the end, is that this will help speed up the process of getting possibly time-sensitive

information to any police officers on duty. It has to be stressed that all incidents have to be reported through the normal channels at this point; 999 and 101 - as for now the police don't use things like WhatsApp. 'Slowly dragging the force into the 21st Century...' should, maybe, be the slogan for this endeavour.

For Gimson Road, an added boon is that a larger number of people now actually know each other and talk to one another; imagine that! Well, that's never a bad thing is it? The irony that such a current digital age technology has helped wind the clock back to how things were, before we all got wrapped up in our modern maybe isolated life-styles, is a pleasant fringe benefit.



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The Gimson Road WhatsApp Security Group is a great success and has certainly enhanced the sense of community spirit and pride along the road; so much so that in May an official street party was organised. The road was closed, the sun shone and a few beers and burgers were shared.

It's now being mooted that our WhatsApp idea could spread further afield within the Western Park area to help combat, what some see as, a lack of policing and subsequent enforcement or action being taken over petty crime and anti-social behaviour.

It sometimes appears that there is little to be done about the ever-falling social standards, the nefarious behaviour of certain elements of society and the perceived lack of consequences for the perpetrators. This issue does, however, seem to bother the vast majority of the population.

If groups like ours can help shine a light on this issue and add a missing layer of support within the community then maybe it's worth exploring further?

If the whole of Western Park, Westcotes and neighbouring areas were able to share and discuss issues of concern, then maybe the message will get out there to the Powers That Be that we are not happy with current levels of policing and enforcement, and that we're making a stand. Criminals might also think twice and give the area a wide berth.

There is an on-going discussion between the local PCSO and the Gimson Road residents about holding a meeting at St Anne's Community Hall on Letchworth Road in the next few weeks to discuss setting up similar groups and opening up the communications between them.

If you'd like to get the details on that you're very welcome to email Ed at edgriff36@gmail.com

Gimson Road Residents Group

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tic music and activities available for children, too.

We will also be continuing with our community
consultation and have our ideas roll for you to
have your say on what is missing in our area and
what activities you would like to see take place in
the building once open.

All proceeds go towards raising money for the
refurbishment of the Eco House into community
space!

We look forward to seeing you there and thank
you for your continued support with this project!
Community support is invaluable, and without it,
the project would be less likely to succeed.

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Back in Orbit - Mia & The Moon

Telling the X-Factor to basically get stuffed a few years ago hasn't held back local singing sisters Laura & Mary- Anne Ratcliffe.

The West End's singing sisters, known as Mia and the Moon, have released their latest album 'Yalla' on Spotify and CD. The new work is a combination of original songs performed by the sisters along with a choir of singers from Leicester and takes the form of a live concert.



The girls say: "We did our first recording session January 2018 and started rehearsing with the choir in Feb. We recorded the choir over one weekend in April. After mixing and mastering, we finally sent off for the vinyls and CDs to be made. You can order the CD at their website: www.miaandthemoon.com and watch them by searching social media and YouTube.

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Is £1 Million a Fair Cop?

Twenty one years ago the Hinckley Road Police Station cost £1.6 million to build; nearly £2.8 million today adjusting for inflation.

The three story building has now been put on the market for just £1 million.

Originally the station housed 150 officers and staff but it's now surplus to requirements. Crime Commissioner Lord Willy Bach announced the closure last year due to a reduction in force numbers and financial cuts.

He says the way the public access police services has changed over the last 20 years with more phoning 101 and officers using mobile technology to do their work. Fewer people are actually making a personal visit to front desks.

The closure of Hinckley Road is seen as an efficiency saving but there will still be a station housing officers, the local Neighbourhood Teams and a front desk.

Lord Bach is convinced that maintaining a police station in West Leicester with a public enquiry desk is the way ahead and believes selling the current building off for development and moving into smaller offices is the most effective use of stretched resources.

The money from the sale will be used to pay for the £300,000 new building which will be situated

at the rear yard of the current building off Norfolk Street, in what is now the car park.

The station will stay open until the replacement building is finished but some locals and shop owners are concerned that the police presence in West Leicester will be reduced. Emma Jones from Westcotes said: "I'm glad there'll still be a police station. I've not used it myself but it's a symbol. Not sure tucking

around the back is a good idea though." A business owner from Narborough Road who didn't want to be named was more vocal: "I've had a shop here for thirty years and the area's gone right downhill. It's bad. You've got beggars shouting at you, the worst driving I've ever seen, people parking on the pavement and double yellows, cannabis smells, petty crime, vandalism - the lot. At night it doesn't feel safe. The police have got to be seen out and about. That big police station hasn't made a difference".



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CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

A well known local businessman has taken on one of the most arduous treks in the UK in memory of his mum, raising thousands for Macmillan Nurses at the same time.

Steve Dayman who owns Daymans DIY on King Richards Road took on the National Three Peaks Challenge and dragged his family along on the mammoth journey which involves climbing the three highest peaks of Scotland, England and Wales within 24 hours.



The total walking distance is 23 miles and the total ascent is 10,052ft - with a driving distance of 462 miles between mountains.



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Steve said: "We had to get their first. It took us 11 hours just to get to Ben Nevis. We drove 1195 miles in all".

Eleven family members joined in with more arriving during the final leg at Mount Snowdon. Steve said: "It took 5 hours to get up Ben Nevis and 6 hours each for Scafell Pike and Snowdon. We were knackered by the end of it but we raised nearly £4000 for the Macmillan Nurses".



Macmillan nurses looked after Steve's mum, Irene, in her final days. Her grandson Adam added: "Our original target was £1568 which would fund 56 hours of Macmillan home nurse care or keep a

Macmillan Cancer Support Centre open for seven days.

"We are currently at £3,822 which will fund 136 hours of Macmillan home nurse care or keep a support centre open for 17 days".



If you would like to donate visit: justgiving.com and search for 'thethreepeakschallenge2018'

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Aug Police Update

Officers from across the 3 neighbourhoods (Fosse, Westcotes and New Parks) have continued prioritising knife crime and anti-social behaviour during July. We know seasonally the summer and school holiday period sees rises in general reports of anti-social behaviour. We continue working with schools, youth groups and partners to educate young people however as always the minority give others a bad name. Please continue to notify us of issues in your local areas, however issues related solely to noise should be directed to the City Council noise team in the first instance. Details on their website.

A number of operations have and will continue to focus on those individuals and groups who carry weapons. This incorporates high visibility and targeted patrols, enforcement and warrants. This also includes those premises where potential weapons can be purchased. However, as always those closest to those people carrying weapons can have the biggest impact so please ensure your own children are aware of the implications and risks involved with carrying weapons. There's more information on the 'lives not knives' website. #livesnotlives

A number of neighbourhood consultations across the 3 wards are highlighted on the Leicestershire Police website – under local policing. Please take a look and see when we will be in your area to take your issues and concerns, which you can still provide via 101 or in person at any Police Station.



You will have read in the Gazette about the arson at Eco House on Hinckley Rd on Sunday 29th July. The premises has been disused for some time and has been subject of vandalism. This has, in the past, been used by youths as a den however it is in very poor condition and dangerous so please ensure your children stay well away before an injury or worse occurs.

Enjoy the weather and please continue to be considerate to those around you.

Sgt Spencer Dyer

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



It's the height of summer and Britain's gardeners were praying for a down-pour. Even when the heavens did eventually open, it will still take weeks of steady rain for the ground to return to anything like normal.

The cracked and desiccated soil has lost its absorbency and the water will mostly flow off or go straight down to the subsoil. With the cracks I've seen in some lawns, watering the turf may well cause it to rain in middle earth! If your lawn looks like a sand pit covered in crushed Shredded Wheat, then there's little you can do for it at the moment, other than buy some green spray paint! This sounds crazy, but is a real solution for some gardeners - specialist grass paint is available online!



Most lawns should recover but will need restorative work once the drought is over. Those who pride themselves on a lush carpet-like sward will be disappointed to discover that it's the soft, low growing

grasses that die out first, leaving tougher, less ornamental rye grasses to proliferate. Reseeding with a fine grass mix in the autumn, as well as scarifying, aerating and topdressing to improve soil quality, should have most lawns back to their full glory in time for next spring.

It's not just grass that's struggling. Even trees are showing signs of stress. Birch trees have started to shed leaves as they decide preventing water loss is more important than photosynthesising, and my apple trees have begun shedding their fruit in an act of self-preservation.



Focus on spot watering specimen plants that are showing stress, making sure to thoroughly water the soil. Just wetting the surface of the soil could do more harm than good - it encourages shallow root growth, rather than deep roots that provide natural drought tolerance. Shading and windbreaks can also help plants, by reducing water-loss through the leaves. Make sure to drench pot plants - plunge small pots into a bucket of water and allow to soak for a couple of minutes.

And if all else fails, try doing a rain dance on your freshly painted lawn.

Tony Huxley



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1		2		3		4
5				6		
7						
8						

1 Across: Not winters **1 Down:** Conspicuous **2:** Halfway point in a school term **3:** Place to eat out **4:** Children's play place **5:** Young man **6:** Heavy weight **7:** Optical medicine **8:** Shakespearean play © Paul Towers

	5			4	3		
				8	9	6	
			6	5		2	
3				1			
	7		8	3	5		2
				7			8
		9		4	1		
4	1	3					
		5	9				4

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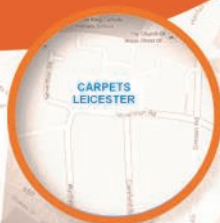
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