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News and Views for Western Park • Westcotes • The Fosse

## Merry Christmas! From the Western Park Gazette



*More inside*

### Merry Christmas From The Editor

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the Western Park Gazette.

In a rare and massive blast of egomania and self seeking publicity we've put ourselves on the front cover to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and to mark last month's 50th issue. You never know we might do it again at our 100th issue party!

This month: Roger Blackmore delves into the life and times of celebrated Leicester painter Mary Annie Sloane, Helen Knott hunts down two of the only remaining independent toy shops in the county and a thousand pounds has been raised at a special gig to replace equipment stolen from the Woodgate Adventure Playground.

Rod Smart from the Hinckley Road Policing Unit has his latest update and Tony Huxley has some good advice when it comes to Christmas trees.

And since it's Christmas (You've probably noticed!) there's the normal crossword and Sudoku in the back as well as a bumper set of Yuletide quiz questions to while away the time waiting for Father Christmas to get stuck into the mince pies.

If you would like to contribute to the Gazette then please get in touch. [e: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk](mailto:e:editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk)

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# 50th Issue Shindig!

December 10th saw the great and the good gathered together and celebrate 50 editions of the Western Park Gazette.



Contributors, readers and friends got together at the Park café bar on Hinckley Road to mark the achievement. Publisher Richard Perry said: " Fifty issues is a bit of a milestone. There are lots of advert only rags around, but very few community magazines. What we do is certainly quite unique. Firstly because all our regular contributors have proved popular with readers and are connected to the area, secondly our print quality is very high and our distribution is thorough. We started out

just covering Western Park but the footprint has grown to over 10,000 copies a month as we expanded across the Fosse area, Westcotes and beyond. We've also had huge support from local businesses as well. We couldn't do it without any of them."

Western park Councillor Susan Barton added: "There's a great sense of community in Western Park. The Gazette plays an important role in strengthening the bonds in our neighbourhood by keeping us up to date with what's happening locally. It contributes to our sense of place and belonging."



Mia & the Moon

Regular columnists Helen Knott, Tony Huxley, Roger Blackmore and Rod Smart attended the shindig to be entertained by local acoustic duo Mia and the Moon, sisters Laura and Mary-Anne Radcliffe who have featured in past issues of the Gazette. Laura said, "People always say they've seen us in the magazine. We're honoured to come and sing. We love doing gigs like this!"

*Front Cover pic by SVK. From the left. Tony Huxley, Roger Blackmore, Richard Perry, Helen Knott.*



Roger Blackmore & Mike Watson (Takeover Radio)

## A Little Light in the Dark



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# Mary Annie Sloane

**Earlier this year an exhibition took place at the William Morris Gallery in London devoted to the work of Mary Annie Sloane.** This remarkable and influential artist was a Leicester woman.

Born in 1867 into a comfortably off family living on Welford Road, her father was a doctor at the Royal Infirmary and her mother, formerly Sarah Stretton, may have been a member of the family after whom Stretton Road was named.

Young Mary was educated at Belmont House School and went on to study at the Leicester School of Art before going on to continue her studies in London.

It was Mary's friendship with May Morris, the daughter of the celebrated William Morris, that first brought the young Leicester born artist into contact with members of the Arts and Crafts movement. She was to go on to meet people such as Bernard Shaw and Edward Burne Jones and to pay many visits to the Morris summer home of Kelmscott Manor. The house, which is now open to visitors, is by the banks of the Thames, near Lechlade.

From 1888 Mary exhibited her work at various galleries. One of her earliest exhibits was a picture of the Old Town Hall in Leicester. Interestingly her picture of Aylestone Packhorse bridge gained an award at the Paris Salon in 1903.

Although continuing to live in London for much of the year, Mary kept up her contacts with family and friends in Leicester and



St. John's Parish Church Enderby

Enderby where she took up what seems to have been semi-permanent residence in later life. Indeed a substantial number of her paintings and etchings are set in and around Enderby. These include a number of pictures of stocking frame knitters and weavers at work in what was then a significant industrial village.

Mary Annie Sloane pursued many other interests throughout her long life. She became a member of the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society and it was that same society which published an excellent biography of her by Shirley Aucott in their magazine earlier this year.

Mary lived on well into her nineties and passed away in 1961. Today, pictures by this, perhaps too often neglected, local artist can be found in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to New Walk Museum in Leicester.

*Roger Blackmore*

# Uprooted!

**The high winds at the start of the month caused damage to homes and businesses across Leicestershire, keeping the emergency services busy.**

The Met Office said that there were gusts of up to 140mph in places across parts of the country. Although emergency services were dealing with problems across the county, Leicester was relatively unscathed. But we didn't escape the gusts scot-free in West Leicester as this picture taken off Dorchester Road demonstrates.



**Got a story or picture? Holding an event or you're doing something special?**

**Tell us all about it!**

***editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk***

## Western Park Gazette

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*As part of her Christmas shopping spree, journalist & broadcaster Helen Knott visits two of the only remaining independent toyshops in Leicestershire*

## KNOTT'S LANDING

**Leicester toy shop Dominoes sadly closed its doors this year, another casualty of the recession and shoppers turning to the internet and supermarkets in search of a bargain, at a time when price is king.** So is there still a place for the traditional toy shop on the high street?

I think toy shops are often the places children first learn about the value of money and they are exposed to toys and games they otherwise would not have seen. They can be magical places which stay in the memory long after you have grown up.

I remember using pocket money to buy dolls dresses and saving up Sindy tokens to get a free frock for my pink lady of choice. I still have her, along with her horse and carriage along with now slightly knackered box. I know exactly which shop they came from. Unfortunately I'm not sure many children nowadays will have those kinds of memories.

James Colclough opened Melton Toys in 2009. He thinks toy shops still have a lot to offer.

"I think toys are a really tactile purchase. The kids like to come into the toy shop and get their hands

on them and get inspired."

He uses displays to introduce children to toys they might not have come across before: "A model airplane out of the box in the window of a model shop - you used to see it and think, 'I really want to build that' and yet modelling has become almost a thing for retired blokes."

"We find people do tend to like fairly traditional gifts like toy cars, toy dolls and a lot of puzzles and games at Christmas."

At Geoff's Toys in Coalville Jenny Cross and her Brother Nick Hall actually lived in a toy shop as youngsters. Jenny said: "As a toy shop we have been here for 44 years. We give people a service, knowledge and helpfulness. We try and compete on price but everything else is so important."

If Leicestershire's toy shop owners are anything to go by, toy shops will thrive by providing a positive buying experience for children and their relatives, something the internet just can't do.

Buy a toy from one of these guys this Christmas and you will be keeping the dream alive!



## A Christmas Poem

Fill the town,  
With Christmas cheer,  
Drink some wine,  
Or even beer.

Fill every place,  
with joyful glee,  
And decorate,  
Your Christmas tree.

Have your fun,  
And open gifts,  
Give West Leicester,  
a Christmas lift.

Perri Carter



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# Dynamic New Business!

**What do you do when you have been the chairman of Braughton Astley Parish Council, have spent twenty-two years working in the public sector, are the Managing Director of a large health and safety consultancy firm and have an encyclopedic knowledge of flooring?**

Easy. You put all that experience together into one package and open a shop on Hinckley Road specialising in top quality flooring and home interiors.



David Simms is a man who doesn't sit down much and exudes confidence about his new business D.F.I (Dynamic Flooring and Interiors) at 261 Hinckley Road. David says: "Originally I was involved in all

aspects of safety flooring from supply and fitting through to health and safety and management training. I've built up a very successful company but I'm also passionate about high street shopping and breathing life back into small independent retail business.

"Since we've opened people have been coming in and saying how pleased they are that we're retail and not fast food and this has been a great start. They have been recommending us right, left and centre!"

"Yes; there's on-line shopping and large faceless flooring and carpet stores but we can easily compete against them in both cost and quality. I am passionate about creating a friendly and knowledgeable shopping experience for our customers. People still want that personal touch; to see and feel what they buy and get it at the right price."

The range of products on offer at D.F.I is staggering. "We've got a massive range of quality carpets and flooring from major brands ready to be fitted by our highly qualified and experienced staff. Even if you want tartan carpet; we can find it and fit it. We're also constantly looking for and buying in some terrific and very attractive new home furnishings. I've even surprised myself what we can get!"

"Come in and have a browse around the shop and look through the catalogues; you'll be amazed at what we can do and at the price we can do it at!"

*Sponsored Article*

## Christmas Time Safety Tips

**Christmas is a time of the year that most people, regardless of religious background, look forward to. Unfortunately, criminals also look forward to Christmas but they prefer to take rather than give.**

The team at Hinckley Road Policing Unit are asking us to think of less obvious places to leave presents than under the tree. Now that the nights have drawn in, it is also advisable to leave a light on a timer and make sure that curtains are opened and closed at the right time when out to give the impression that someone is inside. For further crime prevention advice, please contact your local police via 101 or pop into any police station.

For more information about policing in our area visit [www.leics.police.uk/local-policing](http://www.leics.police.uk/local-policing). Alternatively follow: [www.facebook.com/leicestercitypolice](http://www.facebook.com/leicestercitypolice) or Twitter on @LPWesternPark, LPFossePolice or LPWestcotesCops or email: [hinckleyrd.lpu@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:hinckleyrd.lpu@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk).



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Shop Local

Eat Local

Spend Local

Enjoy Local

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local businesses in the  
Western Park Gazette



## Playground Fundraiser

Local people raised £1000 when they turned out in force to support a fundraiser to help a children's community playground hit by three burglaries.

Staff at the Woodgate Adventure Playground, Bonchurch Street, Leicester have been left devastated by the attacks which saw £3,000 worth of equipment stolen.

In response to the raids, over 200 supporters of the after-school and holiday facility, which offers activities to between 80 and 100 children in the Woodgate and Fosse area, held a tribute fund-raising night.

Fosse Ward councillor, Ted Cassidy, who was at the event in Newfoundpool Working Men's Club, said: "The Woodgate Adventure Playground is vital

for this area as it serves the needs of some of the most disadvantaged children in the city.

"The playground has been going on for many decades that it is vital we keep it. It is a significant part of the community and the facilities help bring out the talents of the children. For instance, the children are doing a Christmas play, they are fantastic at it."

The loss of stereo equipment, microphones and other necessities has put the children's Christmas production and other activities under threat, but the charity remains hopeful in carrying on.

In addition to services provided, the playground runs a very important nursery for younger children. This facility is vital for families living in the community as they face difficulty in accessing these services by going into the city.

According to Mr Cassidy, Council ward funding will provide better security cameras to avoid future break-ins and new fencing to enable the children to play in safety.

The fundraiser saw performances given for free from vocalist Mick Smith, The UpBeatles – a Fab Four tribute act and James Aaron King, an Elvis Presley tribute artist.

Mr. King said: "If the event provides the playground with what it needs to offer its service to the local children then this event has got to be worth it".

**Offers of help can be made by calling the centre on 0116 262 4258.**

*Rizwana Ganatra, DMU Square Mile reporter*



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## Smoke a Bishop this Christmas!

We are all familiar with the traditional Christmas drinks like eggnog, snowballs and mulled wine but have you ever tried a **smoking bishop**?

After Scrooge's reformation at the end of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", he suggests getting together with Bob Cratchit for a large bowl or three of smoking bishop.

Mulled wines were popular festive drinks in 19th century London. Like beer, at the time, they were much safer to drink than the untreated water.

### HOW TO MAKE

#### SMOKING BISHOP:

Take 6 oranges and/or lemons, bake until they go brown then stick in 6 cloves each. Place them in a bowl, cover with a bottle of red wine,

add ground ginger, cinnamon, mace and allspice and put in a warm place for a day. Squeeze the fruit into the wine and strain, then add a good measure of port and sugar to taste. Heat gently for 20 minutes, and serve with a cinnamon stick. Now you know!



## December Police Update

*The Smart View with Sgt. Rod Smart*  
**Christmas activities have now taken off bringing with them the tradition of carol singing.**

Parents are advised to make sure that our younger carollers are given appropriate safety advice. Please also remember that some older residents can be intimidated or upset by people knocking on the door after dark. Please keep an eye on older neighbours and make sure that carol singing off-spring don't upset anyone.

On 7 November, thieves burgled a house on Harrow Road using a ladder stored in the alley-way of the house to access a first floor window. Residents are reminded to lock their alley-gates (when fitted) and to make sure that anything that could be used to climb, such as a ladder, is secured to something immovable.

On 20 November local officers executed a search warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act at an address on Tetuan Road. Over eighty cannabis plants were found, a local man and woman were arrested and subsequently bailed pending further enquiries. The police rely on the vigilance of residents and local intelligence and would urge local residents to be aware of suspicious addresses with strange smells.

On 25 November, a seventeen year old youth from the New Parks area was arrested after an eighteen year old girl and twenty year old man were assaulted during an attack involving a brick. The youth has subsequently been charged with two offences of ABH and is due to appear in Court.

On 29 November two an address on Beaconsfield Road was searched in relation to burglaries which occurred elsewhere in the County. The operation took a number of hours and involved a significant number of officers, including armed officers. Due to the nature of the incident, the road was closed for a number of hours and caused significant inconvenience for residents. Two local men (aged 31 and 32 were arrested and are assisting us with our enquiries). We would like to thank local residents for their patience and during this inconvenient incident. We would also like to reassure residents that the involvement of armed officers was merely a precautionary measure and that no members of the public were at risk during the incident. We would also like to reassure local residents that this sort of operation is unusual and that it is safe area.

Earlier on the same day a prolific shoplifter was spotted and arrested on Fosse Road South. After interview she was charged with a number of shop thefts from various shops around the area.

## Events Diary

**Zumba Class** Tues. 7.15 - 8.15 at New College. Call Sarah - 07810 307 113.

**Fosse Camera Club:** Fridays. St. Peter's Church Rooms. 7.45pm. 0116 299 2230.

**Fosse Singers:** Fosse N'hood Centre. Weds. 7pm.

**International Folk Dancing:** Monthly 2nd & 4th Fri. St. Anne's Hall. 2-4pm. T: Geoff on 0116 285 8352.

**Peter Crebbin & his Cool Swing Band:** Café Cino at Hilton Hotel Meridian. 5th Jan, 1pm-3:30pm.

**Chicago:** Until 18th Jan. Curve Theatre. 0116 242 3560.

**Cinderella:** Until 4th Jan. Little Theatre. 0116 254 2266.

**Aladdin:** Until 5th Jan. De Montfort Hall 0116 2333 111.

**Christmas Funfair:** Until 7<sup>th</sup> Jan. City centre.

**Spirits of Christmas (Ghost stories):** 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. Guildhall. 7pm. £7.

**Christmas Stories & Crafts (5-11yrs):** 21<sup>st</sup> Dec. Central Library. 11am. Free.

**Mediaeval Christmas:** 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. Guildhall. 11-3pm. Family activity. £2.50 and **Live Historic Yuletide Entertainment & Tales** at 4.30 & 7.30. From £6.00.

**The Leicester Cathedral Carol Service:** 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 4pm.

**I've Seen Santa (Kid's entertainment):** 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec. Y Theatre. 11.30am & 2pm. From £5.

**Christmas Eve at Leicester Cathedral:** Crib Service – 3pm. Midnight Mass 11.30pm.

**Dave's Comedy Festival:** 10<sup>th</sup> Jan. De Montfort Hall. 7.30pm. 0116 2333 11.

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## Tony Huxley's Christmas Tidings



**It's the time of year when 8 million innocent conifers are cut down and tortured in UK homes, then unceremoniously dumped a few weeks later.** But there are ways to ease the tree's passing and make it last the whole festive season.

Try putting your tree up the day you buy it, otherwise store it outside in a sheltered spot until you're ready. Use a stand that holds a reasonable amount of water. Cut a few centimetres off the base before putting up the tree. The trunk contains tiny xylem and phloem tubes that transport fluids and nutrients around the tree. The fresh cut allows these tubes to draw up water. But if the water dries up they seal themselves making the tree die quicker, so make sure you keep the water topped up. They can drink quite a large amount, particularly in the first few days.

When I was a child the only readily available Christmas trees were Norway spruce. I remember that by Christmas Eve the merest touch would create a shower of drought hardened needles eager to puncture skin. Now there are at least a dozen species of conifer to choose from and

many are happy to hold onto their needles.

Firs such as Nordman, Noble and Frasier keep their needles and shape well. So does the Blue Spruce. Its blue-grey foliage makes a nice change but the surgically sharp needles can make decorating a challenge. Pines like the Scots are an interesting alternative with their long needles, although the shape can be more unpredictable.

Christmas tree farming is a UK success story with production nearly doubling over the last decade. So don't forget to buy British where possible and recycle your tree in the New Year, when I will see you with more gardening tips and green fingered tittle-tattle.

Merry Christmas!

Tony Huxley

*You can recycle your Christmas tree at the Bridge Road Recycling Centre off Spence Street LE35 3DL and at Freemans Common LE2 7SQ.*



## COUNCILLORS SURGERIES

**Fosse Cllrs Surgery:** Monthly, 2nd Sat, 10.30-11.30, Fosse Neighbourhood Centre & last Sat 10.30 -11.30am at Woodgate Residents Association.

**Westcotes Cllrs Surgeries:** Westcotes Library, 1st Sat each month, 10.30 - 11.30am and 4th Fri each month, 10.am-11am. Manor House Neighbourhood Centre, 2nd Friday every month, 10-11am.

**Western Park Cllrs Surgery:** Monthly-2nd Weds St. Paul's Church Rooms, Kirby Road. 7-8.00pm.

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS

### Western Park

**Tues 14th Jan 2014** at 7.pm - St Anne's Church Hall, Letchworth Road.

**Tues 11th March 2014** at 7.pm

### Westcotes

**Tues 21 Jan 2014 & Tues 25th March 2014** at the East West Community Project. 7.pm.

### Fosse

**19th Feb 2014** 6.00pm - Newfoundpool Neighbourhood Centre, Pool Road.

## Western Park Gazette

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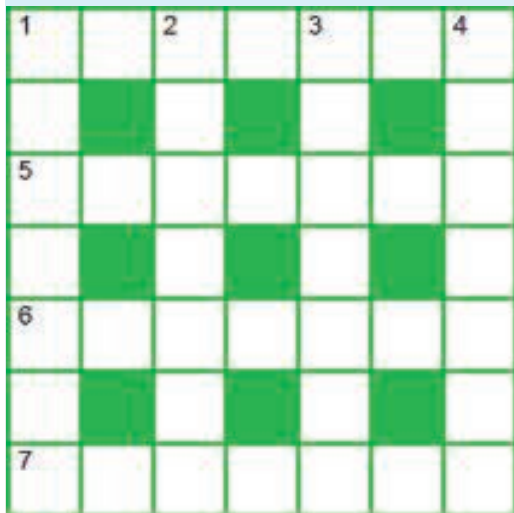


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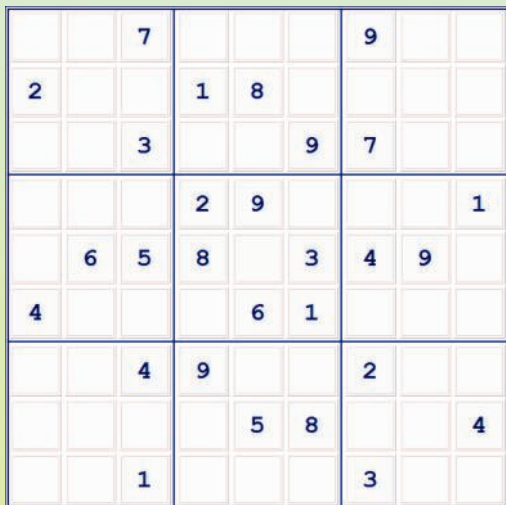
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# BRAIN *TAZERS*



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## The Christmas Quiz

1. What is the chemical formula of snow?
2. What red-blooming Christmas plant came originally from Mexico?
3. Brandy is made from distilling what?
4. Which famous comedy double-act partner made the first ever UK mobile phone call, New Year's Day, 1985?

5. In what country is White Christmas, a cake made of coconut, crisped rice & dried fruit, popular?
6. Who starred in the 2000 film The Grinch Who Stole Christmas?
7. Pine needles are said to be a good source of which vitamin?
8. Which hit Christmas single was recorded by Aled Jones?
9. What drink celebrating its 60th anniversary has a prancing fawn mascot on the bottle?
10. Christmas Crackers was the first Christmas edition of which popular BBC comedy series?
11. What British spacecraft was lost on Mars at Christmas 2003?
12. What was Queen's 1984 Christmas single called?
13. What is a baby Turkey more correctly called, other than a chick?
14. What Christmas song did James Pierpont compose in 1857 for Thanksgiving Day?
15. Gwyl San Steffan is the name for 26th December, St. Stephen's Day or Boxing Day, in which country?
16. What Christmas item takes its name from the old French word estincelle, meaning spark?
17. In which country is it a tradition to hide all brooms in the house on Christmas Eve?
18. Who wrote the songs for the 1954 film White Christmas?
19. In the song The Twelve Days of Christmas, how many pipers are there?
20. What did Scottish students take from Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1950?
21. Marzipan is normally made with sugar and the flour meal of which nut?
22. Name Father Christmas's 9 reindeers.
23. What festive drink made with milk, cream, sugar and beaten eggs?
24. Who was "Driving Home for Christmas" in 1988?
25. In The Muppet Christmas Carol which character was played by Kermit the Frog?
27. What Christmas food is made from "Marsh Whorts"?
28. What was the first artificial Christmas tree made from?
29. Which famous author wrote the first Kings Speech broadcast in 1932?
30. Who starred in the title role in the film Elf?

**Answers on line at**

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