



ON THE RIGHT TRACK?



More on Page 4



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Hello From The Editor

Seasons Greetings and welcome to the December issue of the Western Park Gazette.

Yuletide is upon us. The Christmas trees are bedecked with tinsel and LED based twinkles, the manic drive to fight through the crowds to grab that last minute gift is almost over and somewhere near the North Pole Father Christmas is polishing Rudolph's nose to a shine!

And in this festive issue, we wonder if the painted feet dangling across Narborough Road bridge really do represent Leicester, the ever popular new Westcotes Residents' parking ticket machines get vandalised, Helen Knott meets the star of Leicester's biggest panto, Roger Blackmore celebrates what will be the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta and its connections to Leicester. Our gardening expert, Tony Huxley delves into the history of the Holly and the Ivy - mercifully he's not singing it... Rod Smart has the update from Hinckley Rd Policing Unit and we meet a local tennis prodigy.

Also the latest from the Sq. Mile Project, the definitive list of the best places to eat in west Leicester and there's a bumper Christmas quiz and 'biggish' crossword in the back.

Have a very Merry Christmas!

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Events Diary

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's Cool Swing Band: 1st Sun Monthly. Café Chino at Hilton Hotel, Meridian. 1-3.30pm.
Sleeping Beauty: Until 23rd Dec. Peepul Centre. w:peepulcentre.com
Pinocchio: Until 3rd Jan. Curve Theatre.
Cinderella: Until 3rd Jan. w.demonthall.co.uk
Puss in Boots: Until 4th Jan. Little Theatre. w:littletheatre.net
Sound of Music: Until Jan 17th. Curve Theatre.
Xmas Funfare: Until 3rd Jan. Humberstone Gate.
Spirit of Xmas Ghost Stories: 19th Dec. Guildhall. w.leicester.gov.uk/museums
Spirits of Xmas Ghost Stories: 18th Dec. 7.45pm. Guildhall. 0116 253 2569.
Beer & Carols: 18th Dec. The Western. 8.00pm.
Hanukkah Festival: 20th Dec. 4.45pm. Vic Park.
Victorian Xmas: 21st Dec. Family fun. 11-3pm & a Victorian Christmas Show. 7.30pm.
Beer & Carols: 22nd Dec. Pi Bar 8.00pm.
Sing Christmas: 22nd Dec. St. Augustine's Worship Centre 7-8pm.
Story of YMAS: 22/23rd Dec The Y. 0116 255 7066
Dave's Comedy Fest Preview Show: 9th Jan. De Montfort Hall. w:demonthall.co.uk

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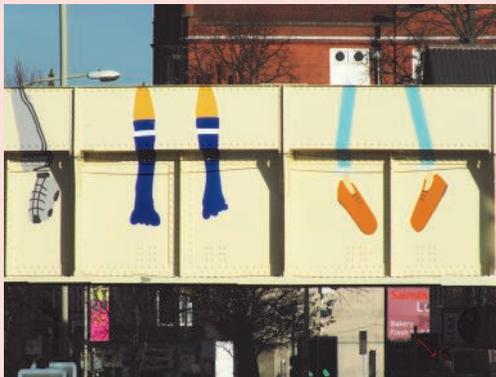
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On The Right Track?

When renovation work began on the Narborough Road railway bridge, little did graphic design and illustration student Kieran Stott-Everett realise the controversy he would be stirring up.

A bridge design competition was part of a £340,000 project between DMU, Network Rail and the City Council to improve the look of the bridge and brighten up the West End. Kieran beat forty other entries with his hosiery and footwear inspired design.



He was hoping his motif of six pairs of cartoon legs would give passers by something to smile about. Each pair of dangling legs represent a different aspect of Leicester's multicultural life with a nod to the city's past hosiery and footwear industry as well as the football and rugby teams.

Now that the bridge has been unveiled for a few weeks and armed with this information we headed to Narborough Road to gauge the reaction.

One local business man was less than sympathetic: "We call it the suicide bridge because it looks like they're about to jump off".

Marion Reynolds who lives in the West End said: "If it's supposed to represent our sports teams - they've missed out the cricket." Graham White who works nearby was more positive: "It's definitely an improvement and it does brighten the place up, but if you hadn't told me it represented Leicester, I wouldn't have guessed."

"I'm not from Leicester and I don't really get it but I quite like it." said student Ami Jones. "But I'd hate to have legs like that!"



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Magna Carta - The Local Link

Next year will see the 800th anniversary of one of the most dramatic political events in English history; the signing by King John of the famous Great Charter or Magna Carta at the insistence of his often rebellious barons.

John had succeeded his brother Richard the Lionheart in 1199. It was not long before he earned the nickname, John Lackland, as a result of his loss of so many English possessions in France. He was also widely regarded as an ill tempered and cruel individual. In fairness there are some historians who regard him as having been, on the whole, an impressively capable administrator. He was also responsible for granting the town of Leicester one of its earliest charters.

What can be in no doubt was the antipathy felt towards the monarch by his barons and senior clergy. Interestingly it was a meeting held at Leicester Castle in 1201 that saw many of the most powerful barons in the land gathering to discuss their many and varied grievances.

As John's reign progressed, the barons became ever more disenchanted with their monarch. Thus it was that in the summer of 1215 they confronted the king at Runnymede, close to the River Thames on the borders of what are now the counties of Berkshire and Surrey. Here they forced him to sign the

Great Charter designed to both protect their baronial privileges and to guarantee various rights of all free-born citizens. They also appointed 25 of their number to see that the Charter was properly enforced. One of those appointees was the Lord of Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire.

I understand that in Leicester sometime last year representatives of these barons, or their baronial seats, met in Leicester to discuss ideas for celebrating the 800th anniversary. Certainly the



American Bar Association which erected one of the two impressive monuments at Runnymede is likely to be playing a prominent part.

I find Runnymede an impressive and poignant spot despite the busy main road running right through the middle of the site. Only a short distance from Windsor Castle, there are some beautiful walks in the area which is now owned by the National Trust and which has largely escaped modern suburban building.

It is likely that the number of visits to this historic site will increase as the historic anniversary approaches. © Roger Blackmore

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CBeebies presenter Alex Winters is performing in Cinderella at De Montfort Hall this Christmas. It will be the second time he has played Buttons so Helen Knott caught up with him to find out more.

KNOTT'S LANDING

Scripts for Cinderella, De Montfort Hall's Christmas offering, arrived on CBeebies star Alex winter's desk in October and then rehearsals started in earnest to be ready for Christmas. Alex said: "I am quite overwhelmed with the talent. There are two 'faces' in it, myself and Kulvinder Ghir (Goodness Gracious Me) but the others have been in things like the Lion King in the West End and Porgy and Bess in Regents Park.

"I have done panto for quite a while, I have never done a panto without singing and dancing even though I am a Dad and I have lost all ability to dance. All I can do is step from side to side.

"I will be embarrassing my own kids. It's only right I do it to my kids through the medium of song and dance and silly walks."

Cinderella itself is exciting him too, written by Leicester lass and Artistic Director of the Hackney Empire Susie McKenna, it is set to bring laughs and songs aplenty: "Kulvinder brings his sense of humour; I will be bringing readymade relationships with children and the rest of the cast blow us away with their performance. I am really looking forward to being in a high standard panto. It's fun.

"We'll belt out songs, play with water pistols and I like that each performance is different and everything is up for grabs, so I am excited."

With Alex spending most of the Christmas period living and working in Leicester, what is he most looking forward to? "I can't wait to go and hit the Indian food. Kulvinder and I are available to be taken out over the Christmas period... We are definitely open to offers.

"Leicester for me is Gary Lineker, always got his sticker in my Panini sticker book and more recently Kasabian. I am a huge music fan".

Finally I ask what is possibly the most important question, given to me by a youngster when I asked what I should ask Alex. Would you rather have the Head of a Lobster or the body of a kangaroo? He laughs and tells me he thinks kids are brilliant. He then takes quite a while to think it through: "It would have to be the body of a kangaroo. I can get around and no-one is going to mess with me because of my little boxing arms but I get to keep my face so I could still work. I really like lobsters but that would just be weird". *Helen Knott*



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Ticket Machines Damaged

Two ticket machines on Westcotes Drive between Braunstone Avenue and Sykefield Avenue have been broken out of the ground and left on their sides.

The machines are part of the controversial extension to the Residents' Parking Scheme which began a trial run at the end of November.

The scheme is proving extremely unpopular with many residents who object to paying £25 for a permit to park near their homes. Others on adjoining roads, not covered by the scheme, are also suffering since displaced cars are now causing access difficulties for some residents.

No cash was taken from the vandalised, rarely used machines which dispense tickets for a maximum 3 hour stay. One disgruntled local resident said: "Perhaps they didn't take any cash, because there wasn't any in there. People all park outside my house now. The council could have just put a single yellow line down and a limited parking sign. It would have been cheaper and you can't crowbar out yellow lines".



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Fancy a sing song?

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Rehearsals take place every Thursday from 11am-1pm and the group welcomes anyone with a love of singing.

You do not need any experience to join and it is completely free!

Please contact the DMU Square Mile team for more information:

T: (0116) 257 7135

E: squaremile@dmu.ac.uk

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**DMU
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Newfoundpool Forum

Have your say about what is happening in your community!

DMU Square Mile is working with residents to establish a forum where people can highlight some of the issues they face in the community and work towards solutions with the help of DMU, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Police and Leicestershire NHS Partnership.

DMU Square Mile will help residents grow ideas and establish projects for the community; with the support of the city council, local NHS and the Police.

Anyone wishing to join the forum should contact Square Mile squaremile@dmu.ac.uk, or by phone - (0116) 257 7135.



Enjoy two FREE comedy shows with De Montfort University Square Mile Programme

Following from the success of last year, DMU Square Mile are again offering two FREE shows as part of Dave's Comedy Festival - both held at Newfoundpool Working Men's Club, 55 Beatrice Rd, Leicester LE3 9FJ.

Whose Square Mile is it Anyway? 11 February 7pm

DMU Square Mile has again trained a group of local residents to perform Improvised Comedy for the first time. Anything could happen at this showcase of new talent!

Square Mile Smiles III - 12 February 7pm

DMU Square Mile's comedy coach Alan Seaman has been training a group of residents from the local community to perform stand-up comedy for the first time at Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival.

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To book tickets and for more information:

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Free books to get you reading!

We are holding community book swap events at our Newfoundpool Forum Community where more than 200 free children's and adults' books are available.

Simply bring a book you have read and swap it for a new one!

Come and enjoy free refreshments - and choose a new book and learn about the Six Book Challenge supported by DMU staff and the Newfoundpool Forum.

Also find out what is going on in your area at the monthly **Newfoundpool Forum Community Cafes.**

Newfoundpool Neighbourhood Centre
Pool Road LE3 9GH

Please email us at squaremile@dmu.ac.uk or call 0116 257 7135 to find out when our next event is.

Newfoundpool Forum

Families, friends and neighbours of Newfoundpool have been working together after creating a forum to strengthen the community.

The Newfoundpool forum was set up by the Square Mile project, with the help of De Montfort University, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Police and Leicestershire NHS Partnership. Mark Charlton, Square Mile manager, said: "Lots of residents feel strongly that the sense of community in Newfoundpool has been lost but there is a real passion among people who live in the area to try and reinstate it." Meetings are held at the Newfoundpool Neighbourhood Centre for like-minded people to discuss issues in the area and work on projects to improve the community. Some of the biggest issues they have been facing include anti-social behaviour, litter and late-night noise. Mr Charlton added: "Working with the Newfoundpool Forum, we are focusing on projects to bring together people of all ages and put on things that will engage the community and restore that feeling of trust and pride in Newfoundpool."



Since the forum was set up in August, residents have organised Halloween and Christmas parties, a book swap and community cafés.

To get involved with the Newfoundpool Forum, contact Mark Charlton on 0116 250 6183 or mcharlton@dmu.ac.uk. *Katrina Chilver*

KNOCK OUT!

The Community Boxing Gym based at 122 Western is a voluntary run gym that is open to everyone.

They run educational day sessions for local schools to send their students and structured weekday evening sessions between 7pm - 8.30pm for members of the community.

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Tennis Pro at 8!

As parents who live in West Leicester with two young children who attend Christ the King RC School, we felt the need to "put out there" how our children Fallon, aged 8 and Hudson, aged 4, have benefited from the great sporting amenities in the Western Park area.

Western Park alone has so much to offer. It's where our daughter first started playing tennis. We use the park for the play area regularly but wanted something more focused as our daughter got older. She was swimming twice a week at Braunstone Leisure Centre and gymnastics once a week at New College, but we really wanted an outdoor sport for her, so with free courts and a couple of racquets and balls - that's where she started. There was also great encouragement and support from her school who recognised that participating sports have so many extra benefits other than health.

We found that she had a real talent for tennis and joined Westfield tennis centre, where she was coached by Johnny Anderson who soon went on to work at David Lloyd in Narborough, so we followed him there. With regular coaching from Johnny and the use of Western Park for tennis courts, Fallon soon made her mark on the mini tennis circuit. She finished this summer having won



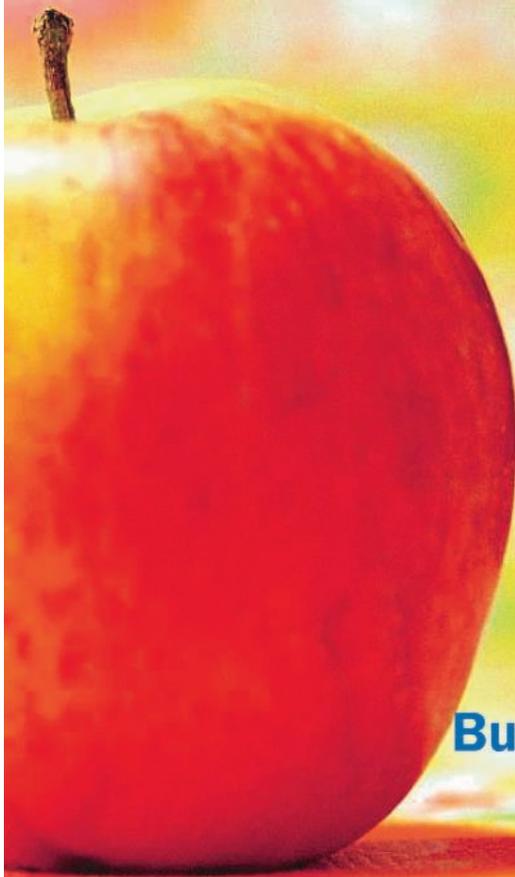
the county closed championship for Leicestershire in the 8's and under category (Mini Red County Champion), got to the quarterfinals of a national 9's and under competition (Mini Orange) and represented David Lloyd, for the whole of the Midlands, playing in another national 9's and under event. All that - and she asked to compete in a mixed gender triathlon recently with 12 other young competitors. She won that too, which astonished us.

We have great facilities on our doorstep, Western Park, New College, Westfield Tennis Courts, cycling track and the Braunstone Leisure Centre.

It has had a positive influence on our children, both can swim, play tennis and do gymnastics.

You never know if your child will excel in a sport or even just enjoy the activity and use up some of the boundless energy children have.

We are really lucky to have so many sporting venues within our area. *David Read*



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Grab a Safe Bite

If you're thinking of grabbing a quick bite on the way home after a festive night out, here is the Food Standards Agency's definitive list of the most hygienic places to eat in our area.

The Agency works with local authorities to enforce food safety and handling regulations. They award a food rating of between 0 for the worst and 5 for the best.

The Best: 5 out of 5 as of 10.12.14

Anika Balti Express 266 Narborough Road.
Betty's Café 19 Raven Road.
Cafe Two Ten 210 Narborough Road.
Chung's Kitchen 170 Fosse Road North.
Colour Works 2 Westbridge Close.
Fryer Sid's 4 Mussion Road.
Greggs 121 Narborough Road.
Jamal Balti House 4 Narborough Road.
Kell's Cafe 26 Hinckley Road.
KFC 313 Narborough Road.
Little Tokyo 33 Braunstone Gate.
Martin's Meats 72 Woodgate.
Mazzies Cafe The Brite Centre.
Subway Narborough Rd, Braunstone Gate & Hinckley Rd.

The Cob And Spud 53 Braunstone Gate.

The Raven Fryer 13 Raven Road.

Yesim Patisserie 29 Narborough Road.

Very Good: 4 Out of 5 as of 10.12.14

Bombay Bites 79 Braunstone Gate.
Buck's Chippy 18 - 20 Buckminster Road.
Cobblers Cafe 75 Carlisle Street.
Crystal Jade 219 Hinckley Road.
Curry Flavours 119 King Richards Road.
Cyprus Kebab House 156 Narborough Road.
Dairy Cafe 1 - 3 Groby Road.
Dominos Pizza 240 Narborough Road.
Eight Fortunes 15 Fosse Road South.
Golden Spice Fish Bar 119 Narborough Road.
Just Vegi Pizza 1 Saxon Street.
Maggie's Café 1 Newport Street.
McChina Express 139 Wyngate Drive.
Mithaas 103 - 105 Narborough Road.
Mobius 35 Braunstone Gate.
Namaste Indian Restaurant 65 Hinckley Road.
Narborough House 284 Narborough Road.
Natterjacks 52 Braunstone Gate.
Nelson's Sandwich Bar 250 Narborough Road.
Noodle House 78 Narborough Road.
Ocean Breeze 11 Beatrice Road.
Papa John's 64 Narborough Road.
Peking House 12 Fullhurst Avenue.
Pizza Hut Delivery 221 Hinckley Road.
Shamim Balti 54 Woodgate.
Sugar Loaf Braunstone.
The Western 70 Western Road.
Woodgate Chip Shop 32 Woodgate.

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December Police Update

The Smart View with Sgt. Rod Smart

In the early hours of 14 November a 17 year old resident at a guest house on Westcotes Drive was robbed by another resident who forced their way into his room with a knife and demanded property. The seventeen year old offender was charged and remanded in custody.

Overnight on 17 November, a significant sum of cash was taken from the safe of a fast food outlet on Hinckley Road. The manager of the store, a 36 year old man from Leeds, has been charged with theft from an employer.

At about midnight on 20 November, a 36 year old man from Braunstone Town was punched to the face and robbed of cash and his phone on Braunstone Gate. The man received a fractured eye socket during the attack but could recall little due to his level of intoxication.

With Christmas coming up, it is an appropriate time to remind readers to take care for their personal safety, especially whilst out drinking. As well as the health risks of excessive alcohol consumption, being so drunk leads people to become vulnerable to theft and well as physical and sexual assault. While our partying, enjoy yourself but please be careful!

Just before 7am on the 29th of November, CCTV operators spotted a man trying car doors on Pool Road, Newfoundpool. A twenty year old man from the City Centre was arrested nearby and subsequently charged with vehicle interference.

We are pleased to report that there have been fewer burglaries since the last edition. Unfortunately over the past two weeks there has been a spate of burglaries in the Fosse and Western Park areas due to householders neglecting to lock their doors or windows. Most of the crimes have been overnight with a mixture of electrical items and jewellery being stolen.

This time of the year does often see an increase in burglaries and thefts from cars, with Christmas presents being targeted. Local residents are advised to invest in additional security measures such as window locks, window alarms and burglar alarms. Many of these are relatively inexpensive and local Police officers can provide suitable advice.

For more information about policing in your area visit www.leics.police.uk/local-policing. Alternatively follow us on Facebook at [leicestercitypolice](https://www.facebook.com/leicestercitypolice) or Twitter on [@LPWWesternPark](https://twitter.com/LPWWesternPark), [LPFossePolice](https://twitter.com/LPFossePolice) / [LPWWestcotesCops](https://twitter.com/LPWWestcotesCops)
 E: hinckleyrd.lpu@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



As the festive season brings a frenzy of Christmas tree buying we often neglect the symbolic importance of many other plants, especially Holly and Ivy. Unlike all those Norway Spruce and Nordmann Firs, holly and ivy are native to Britain and were traditional decorations long before the Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, introduced the first Christmas tree from Germany in 1800.

Holly and ivy were revered long before Christianity reached our shores. With our well defined seasons, evergreen plants were seen as powerful symbols of nature and fertility. The strong, upright holly symbolized masculinity, whereas the softer ivy represented the feminine. Their symbolism was adopted for Christian aims and lives on in carols like "The Holly and the Ivy". The carol is believed to be based on an ancient winter tradition of singing competitions between the sexes.

Today they are used as Christmas decorations, usually woven into wreaths to be hung on a front door. Their tough waxy leaves and resilience to

anything a British winter can throw at them mean they still look fresh well into January.

Holly and Ivy play an important role in both nature and the garden, offering year round interest and a source of shelter and food to hundreds of animal species. Ivy flowers well into the winter and while not as attractive as the virginal white holly blossom, its plentiful nectar supports many insects.



The holly gives us those bright glossy berries so prized this time of year by both Christians and flocks of the feathered kind. Although Holly is supposed to embody masculinity it's only the female plants that bear berries.

If you fancy taking a holly hunt to burn off that Christmas pudding you could take a pleasant stroll through Abbey Park, home to one of the largest collections of Hollies in the county.

Enjoy a cultivating Christmas and a horticultural New Year.
Tony Huxley

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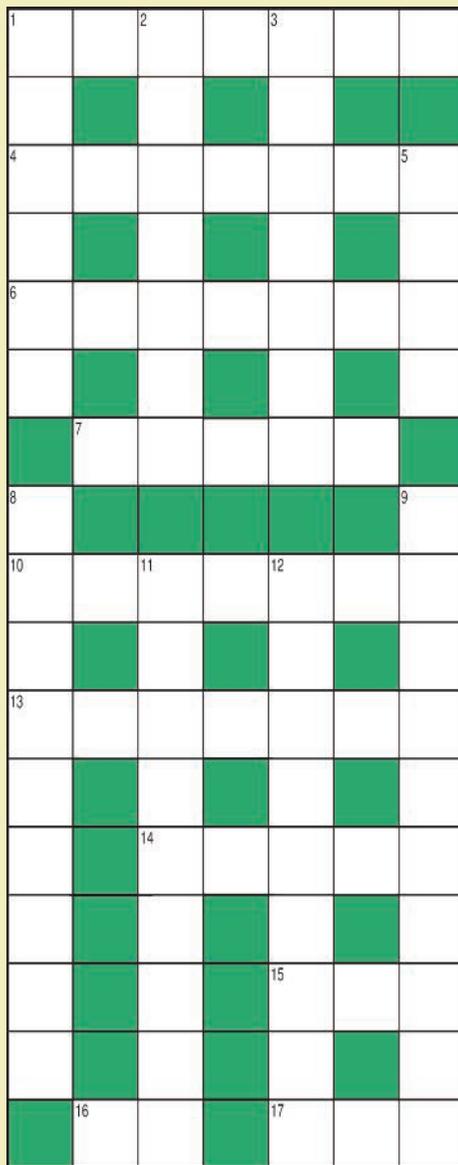


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Biggish Xmas Xword



1 Across: Of the holiday **1 Down:** Cloth
2: Flakier **3:** Pictorial **4:** A type of 1 down
5: Home of the Good Witch **6:** Cold manner
7: Gives thanks **8:** December 25th **9:** New Year bestowment
10: Wall builder **11:** Post holiday necessity **12:** Of Island **13:** Titanic lettuce
14: Not suitable **15:** Double act **16:** Peacemaker
17: A change from turkey!

© Paul Towers

Answers @ www.westernparkgazette.co.uk

Christmas Quiz

1. What are round or oval sweets sometimes filled with fruit preserves or cream and covered with chocolate or sugar called?
2. The film 'Miracle on 34th Street' takes place in which city?
3. How many Wise Men were there according to the bible?
4. Christmas Ridge is located in what underwater mountain range?
5. Which ghost did Scrooge fear the most?
6. Which Christmas song demands figgy pudding?
7. Who discovered Christmas Island?
8. Which 13 year old was Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree in 1958?
9. What is the name of the film family headed by Chevy Chase that features in National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation?
10. What is the name of the cake traditionally eaten in Italy during Christmas?
11. In Icelandic Christmas tradition the 'Yule Lads' are a band of gift giving creatures. What sort of creatures are they?
12. In Tchaikovsky's ballet The Nutcracker, who is the nutcracker's main enemy?
13. If you were given some 'frumenty' at a medieval Christmas party, what would you do with it?

14. Which well-known 20th Century author of fantasy fiction also created a book called The Father Christmas Letters?
 15. Which fruit is normally used to make traditional Christingles?
 16. Since 1947, which European city has donated the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree to Britain?
 17. How cold does it have to be for snow to reach the ground without melting?
 18. Which popular Eastenders character died on Christmas day 2006?
 19. Who played Scrooge in the Muppets Christmas Carol?
 20. Who won a boxing match on Christmas Day 1950 with a technical knock out against Hans Stretz?
 21. Japanese Christmas cakes traditionally contain what type of filling?
 22. What are the SSAS that my true love gave to me?
 23. During Christmas in 1963, what was the number one single by the Beatles?
 24. What Apple product was reportedly the most popular Christmas gift in 2007?
 25. Which of Santa's reindeer has a name which translates to Thunder in English?
- Answers at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk



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