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Merry Christmas From The Editor

Welcome to the December edition of the Western Park Gazette.

Where would we be without Christmas? A lot richer is the correct answer but it's difficult to feel jaded when West Leicesters gets into the holiday spirit.

There was a very successful Westival on Braunstone Gate with 4000 revellers soaking up the atmosphere. Hopefully the business there will be enthused enough to do it all again. We went with a camera to capture it - the same with the annual Christmas Fayre at Dovelands. We've even had a look at the new hi-tech community centre which has risen out of the ashes of Tin Annie. Very swish.

The Yuletide theme continues with Helen Knott bemoaning the death of the Christmas pud and Tony Huxley gets all historical about mistletoe.

Since it's 'that time of year', we've teamed up with Curve to give you the chance to win two tickets to see the excellent Grease The Musical and we've also joined with Takeover Radio and the West End Brewery for a Christmas Eve charity fundraiser.

Finally, a large festive Crossword sits like an overflowing Santa's sack on the inside back page.

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Events Diary

Peter Crebbin's Cool Swing Band: 1st Sun Monthly. at the Hilton Hotel, Meridian. 1-3.30pm
Thursday Club: 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narb' Rd.
West End Pay As You Feel Café: Thurs 7-8.30pm. Tues, Fri & Sat 11-3pm. WE Centre. Andrewes St.
Westfield Gallery: Mon-Sat. 81 Westfield Rd. Call 0116 285 8548 to view.
Grease: 26 Nov-25 Jan. Curve. 7.30pm.
Jack & The Beanstalk. 10 Dec - Jan 3. DMH.
Sleeping Beauty: 16 Dec - 8 Jan. Little Theatre.
DMU Carol Concert: 14 Dec. Leic Cathedral. 3.35pm
Xmas Wreath Making: 14/15 Dec. Guildhall. 7.30pm.
Gilbert (No Sullivan): 16/17 Dec. Upstairs-Western.
Sleeping Beauty: 16 Dec - 8 Jan. Little Theatre.
Board Games Evening: 17th Dec. St. Paul's Church. 5.30-7.30pm.
Santa's Grotto: 17 Dec. Brite Centre. 11-4pm.
Childrens' Wintertime Trail: 17-14 Dec. New Walk Museum. 10-5pm. Free.
Victorian Christmas Past: 18 Dec. Guildhall. 8pm.
Sing Christmas: 19 Dec. St. Paul's & St. Augustine's Worship Centre & The Crows Nest. 7.00pm.
Festive Family Workshop: 21 Dec. Phoenix Square. 12 noon. Free.
Beer & Carols: 22 Dec. Western Pub. 9.00pm
Takeover Radio Xmas Quiz & Fundraiser: 24 Dec. West End Brewery. From 7.30pm.
Leicester Comedy Festival Gala Preview Show. 6 Jan. DMH. 7.30pm.

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Dovelands Xmas Fayre

Parents and children from Dovelands Primary on Hinckley Road got into the Christmas spirit earlier this month with the annual Christmas Fayre.

The fayre was organised by the school's PTFA which funds improvements around the school playground.

Hundreds of young visitors had the chance to meet Father Christmas, play games and win prizes whilst the grown-ups headed for the craft stalls and the mulled wine.

To see more photos and a video of the fun, head to the Western Park Gazette's Facebook page.



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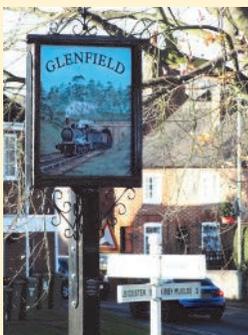


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From Domesday To Motorway

It is hard to believe that Glenfield, the population of which is now some ten thousand people, consisted of a mere 12 households at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086.

The growth in Glenfield's population has been speeded up by the building of new housing estates over many acres of farm land. This included, in the 1980's and 90's, a sizeable estate behind Ellis Park. A former agricultural estate was purchased to make way for County Hall.



Glenfield had begun to expand in the early nineteenth century and reached a population of just over 500 in 1871. By this time various small businesses had opened up in the village, the railway arrived and a number of stocking frame knitters were recorded.

In the aftermath of the First World War times were hard for many in this area. A lack of decent housing was a major issue. At this time land on Glenfield Frith, around what is now the Liberty Road area, could be purchased for as little as

sixpence a square yard. A local benefactor (whose name I have not yet been able to discover) made available small plots to be used as smallholdings from which they would be able to earn a living.

Along came another benefactor, the owner of a bacon factory, who made available bacon boxes to build huts on their plots. Once one room had been built the family would move in and further rooms would usually follow. Gradually the little holdings developed. Today the long strips of land often indicate the sites of these properties where once vegetables fruit and flowers were grown and often sold in Leicester market. Thus the "bacon box houses" appeared on the scene, although of course the original huts have been greatly modernized over the years'.

Later on in the 1920's and after the second world war, the Faire estates were built. In time the shops on the green which at one time included the post office and a grocers, (as well as the butchers shop still located there), were knocked down to make way for maisonettes.

The result is the Glenfield we know today. Currently the new development of Glenfield Park for residential housing and the giant warehouses of Optimus Point are expanding Glenfield ever closer to the M1 motorway.

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KNOTT'S LANDING

I'm worried about the pudding. Christmas pudding to be exact. I fear for its survival. I've just been on one of the many Christmas dinner nights out that pepper my social calendar at this time of year and not one single person chose Christmas pudding as dessert! Chocolate mousse was popular, so was the Raspberry Baked Alaska and anything with salted caramel in it suddenly seems to have people oohing and ahing all over the place but Christmas pudding with brandy sauce is left on the sidelines, like the geek at the school dance.

Christmas puddings have a ridiculously long history, much longer than chocolate puddings which only really showed up in the 1700s when Kings decided it was a health drink. The Christmas pudding, as we know it, probably came from a thick pottage or stew which you kept boiling all day over the fire and eventually put breadcrumbs and egg in to thicken it right up to serve. We used dried fruit to add sweetness at a time when actual sugar was so expensive only royalty could really afford it. It was a way of showing off. "Look at my plum pudding, it's got prunes in it AND currants, well I do live in Stoneygate you know!"

We gradually lost the meat and vegetables but kept the fruit, the breadcrumbs, the eggs and spices. As people moving into towns and cities just had rooms in

the brave new urban world we tied the pudding up in a cloth and took it to the laundry to be boiled! It was solid, sweet, treat food that would fill empty bellies and a little would go a long way. It was also stupidly easy to do.

Alas, now we don't need those qualities in a desert. Now we want flavour and texture. We want our desserts to leap off the plate and snog us. We want something we can take out of the freezer, unbox and present as if we'd spent hours on it. As someone who did spend minutes making a Christmas pudding I want people to choose it, not dodge it for a shop bought chocolate gateaux, and I want to know that it helped induce a four hour food coma that safely gets us through to the buffet tea at 7pm.

Christmas pudding has been abused by manufacturers who used cheap, crappy ingredients. It's terrified people as the blue brandy flames lick round the holly sprig and it wears people out because it takes so long to steam.

So let me plead for the Christmas pudding. A slice of good, homemade pud, microwaved if necessary, still sizzling from the flames and anointed with brandy sauce is a thing of wonder... and next morning you can fry what's left with bacon. **Helen Knott**



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• Don't attempt to fix it yourself - this could stop you getting redress because it will make it harder to prove you did not cause the fault. You may also risk injuring yourself.

• Return it to the retailer - It's the responsibility of the retailer to help you resolve the problem, not the manufacturer. They should cover the costs of returning the item - contact them first to check the best way to do this and to negotiate an option that's most convenient for you.



Getting a repair, replacement or refund

• Bought within the last 30 days - you can get a refund on a faulty product.

• Bought within the last 6 months - you are entitled to have it repaired or replaced once. If the item still doesn't work you should get a full refund.

• Bought more than 6 months ago - you may still get a repair or replacement but you will only get a partial refund to reflect the use you've got out of the item. You'll need to prove you didn't cause the fault which may make it harder to get redress.

• Repair doesn't work? If you have one repair and it doesn't succeed, you can ask for a full or partial refunding, depending on when the purchase was made.

• Replaced with something different? The retailer should try to replace the item like-for-like. This may not always be possible, so if you're offered something you don't want you can ask for a refund.

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WESTIVAL BRINGS IN THE CROWDS

Nearly 4,000 people enjoyed a day of festive fun on Braunstone Gate at the end of November and got to meet the LCFC legend Steve Walsh.

The 'Winter Westival' community street festival was kicked off by 'Walshy' around noon, and people from the West End and beyond got shopping in the festive market for local crafts and tasty treats, having a ride on the funfair, listening to the local bands playing live and meeting the Winter Westival ice queen on stilts!

A group of local volunteers (and staff from the shops and venues along Braunstone Gate) has been working since June to put the festival together, as part of the wider Braunstone Gate Places for People project.

The festival hosted lots of fantastic local craft sellers, as well as children's activities from *The Polish Mums and Children's Centre*, and *Cultivating Communities* who helped 100s of children make wooden reindeer decorations. Local musicians and performers included *The Heartland Roots Band*, while 'Punky Hoops' provided an illuminated hula-hooping and fire-eating finale.

Christina, local resident and volunteer festival organiser, said: "It's been great to get to know people in the local area, and the day has had a really friendly atmosphere, with great live music and street entertainment."



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FLATS GET THE GO AHEAD

Protesters against a developer building a block of student flats, overlooking Bede Park have lost their battle after a Government planning inspector overturned their objections.

The council's planning officers initially refused Code Student Accommodation permission to attach a block of 279 student flats to its existing block in Western Road, arguing the new extension was too big and would have a damaging effect on a densely populated area, putting considerable strain on local services.

Code reduced its original £30 million plan, including a 14 storey building, after strong local objections, but the revised, smaller, proposals were also unpopular and were also blocked by the council.

The planning inspector backed Code who said the council's numbers on students in the ward didn't stack up.

The successful appeal left Code £250,000 out of pocket after costs were refused.

Work on the site has restarted along after assurances that Code will improve local green spaces.



Grease Competition

Here's your chance to go like greased lightning and enjoy this year's must see Christmas Show - Grease The Musical at Curve.

Iconic songs, great singing and a superb cast bring to life the 50's high school romance between Danny Zuko and Sandy Dumbrowski.

We've teamed up with Curve to offer a pair of tickets to the 16th January evening performances for one lucky winner.

It's an email only competition so just send the right answer the question below to go into the draw.



In which year was the Grease song "You're the One That I Want" a UK number 1 single for 9 weeks?

Email your answer, including your name and address, to editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk by December 22nd.

Terms: 1 entry per person, tickets not transferable, judges decision is final. Only the winner will be contacted.

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We've Been Taken Over!

But only in a nice way! The Western Park Gazette has joined up with the West End Brewery and Takeover Radio 103.2 on Christmas Eve to raise money for the Children's Media Trust.

The trust which is the charity behind Takeover Radio, Leicester's community radio station, offers media training, education and life experiences to children aged between 8 and 14. Hundreds of youngsters, and several from West Leicester, have benefited from the courses with many forging successful careers in radio, TV and new media.

Join Takeover Radio's Richard Perry for a Special Christmas Quiz and bumper raffle at The West End Brewery on Braunstone Gate on Christmas Eve from 7.30pm.

There are some great prizes up for grabs supplied by local businesses and if you're lucky, Richard won't scoff the free buffet before you get there...

(Editor) Yeah... He will.



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FROM THE ASHES OF TIN ANNIE

Work on rebuilding St. Anne's community centre on Letchworth Road will be finished on time, on budget and before Christmas says builder Paul Henderson.

The £380 thousand project has taken seven months and involved dozens of skilled crafts people from across Leicester.

The spacious and bright new community centre is ultra low energy and includes over 1000 metres of underfloor heating, waterless toilets, disabled access to the stage area and a full audio video system with a motorised big screen.

The Gazette has posted a video trip around the centre on our Facebook page, so take a look!



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ALL CHANGE UPSTAIRS

It's all change at Leicester's only pub theatre, **Upstairs At The Western**, based above the **Western pub in Westcotes**.

The original team from the Of The Fence Theatre Company have run the project for four years bringing unique, small scale professional theatre, performances and workshops to the West End fringe venue.

Verity Bartsch, Sally Jack and Gary Phillpott, are stepping down to develop new theatre projects leaving the path clear for a fresh group of enthusiasts to take the reins. They said in September: "...after much thought and soul-searching, we have decided it is now time to hand over the reins of running Leicester's pub theatre to somebody new.

"We are therefore looking for successors to continue to run and improve the theatre as we believe it is vital Upstairs at the Western remains a jewel in the community's crown long after we are forgotten".



Following the call for fresh management, a new local group stepped in to lead the theatre. Directors of the Upstairs at the Western CIC, David Bell, Jess Richards and Jess Witthaus will launch a new programme of spoken word, music and comedy from 1st January.

Speaking to The Stage, Mr. Bell, who is the chairman of children's arts company The Spark, said the group's initial priorities for the space would be to maintain the theatre's ethos of staging "intimate" work, before expanding the programme over the next couple of years.

Mr. Bell added he wanted to serve both the theatre's local audience as well as local artists, by developing emerging companies in Leicester and offering theatremakers somewhere to premiere their work and staging scratch nights.

"Whenever I've come out of a play at Upstairs at the Western I have been really moved, and to me that's what great art is. It should create some kind of emotional response, and Upstairs at the Western does that in bucket loads. That's the thing we love about it and we're going to keep that going."

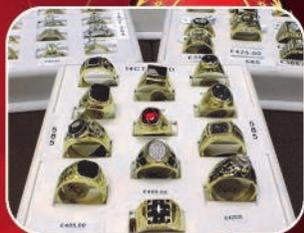
The 50-seat theatre currently stages spring and autumn productions with a winter season being added in 2017/18.

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Nov Police Update

We have recently received a number of reports about a rogue window cleaner in the West Leicester. The types of reports include victims being charged more than they were first quoted; work being carried out without the victim's permission, and victims being charged extra for additional work completed without their permission. We have arrested a male in relation to two of these complaints. We would encourage residents and businesses to use professional window cleaners rather than door to door canvassers. If anyone notices anything suspicious or experiences intimidating behaviour please call us to report this. Victims can also seek advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau in relation to trading standards.

We have received reports of anti-social behaviour, including drug dealing, rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour on Kate Street. This is around the residential premises and the linking pathways. On 1st December local officers held a community meeting to discuss the issues at the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and both uniform and plain clothes patrols have been directed to the area. A patch walk with multi-agencies, including the Dedicated Neighbourhood Team, housing, local counsellors and representatives of Leicester City Council took place a day later.

As we approach the festive season, there are a number of campaigns running in order to assist with living and celebrations. From a crime prevention perspective, I refer again to the Darker Nights campaign and encourage you to keep doors and windows locked secured; ensure that keys are removed from the locks of doors; keep presents hidden and out of sight; and please keep a light on inside your home to give the appearance the house is occupied. Don't leave anything on show in your car, even with a locked vehicle, a thief can smash a window and be in and out within seconds.

The annual crackdown on Christmas drink and drugs driving has begun with increased patrols across the city. If you are out and about driving, then please do not put your life or other people's lives at risk! Avoid The Fatal Four:

- 1. Alcohol and drugs** will impair your driving, so never drink or take drugs and drive.
- 2. Mobile phones:** Your reaction times are reduced if you use a mobile phone while driving. Switch it off before you drive.
- 3. Speeding:** A few extra mph can make all the difference to your reaction and braking distances; so slow down!
- 4. Not wearing a seatbelt:** No matter how short your journey, always wear a seatbelt. Doing so cuts the chance of being killed in a crash by up to 50%.

Sgt Mike Hooper

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



**Christmas! A time for giving,...
And spending vast sums.** We spend a surprisingly large amount on plants. A decent tree can be eye-wateringly expensive. Then there are holly decorations and Christmas door wreaths, imported cut flowers for that special person, a poinsettia for the mother-in-law to kill before Easter. Finally, there's that last limp sprig of mistletoe that costs more than its weight in gold.

This wonderful season of Christian celebration is actually crammed full of pagan tradition and symbolism, and mistletoe is the perfect example.



Greeks used it as a cure for fits; Celtic druids used it in fertility potions that required the slaying of two white bulls. In Viking mythology Loki used a mis-

tletoe-tipped arrow to slay Balder, the Norse god of love and forgiveness. Our present day tradition of the Christmas kiss is attributed to the English serving classes and became widely accepted in Victorian times.

Mistletoe's parasitic nature makes it an oddity and it is often hidden high up in tree canopies obscured by its host's foliage. In fact, mistletoe is only partially parasitic as it does photosynthesise, but it still puts a heavy, sometimes fatal demand on its host. But carefully managed it can make an attractive and interesting addition to the garden. Grow your own kits are available online. If you can find some fresh ripe berries you could try it yourself. Push seeds into cracks in the bark of a suitable donor tree: apple; oak; lime and poplar are some of the most common hosts. Some say you should slit the bark and insert the seeds underneath. Either way don't expect home grown kisses too soon, it can take several years before the fruits of your labours show.

In the meantime make sure you put that over priced sprig you bought to good use and have a wonderful Christmas.

p.s. Do kiss responsibly as you never know where it can lead! Statistically more babies are born in late September, nine months after the Christmas period, than any other time of the year. Maybe the Druids were right, just with less of the bull!



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1 Across: Merry 2 Down: Cheap warm fabrics
 2: Physical world expert 3: To such an extent
 4: Defunct soap 5: Ways out 6: Christmas Tree
 7: The final thing done to a Christmas pudding
 8: Across: Recall 8 Down: Festive Season
 9: Festive Play 10: The direction the wise men
 travelled 11: Emit heat or light 12: He unravels a
 message 13: Person in charge of church vest-
 ments 14: A rich strong wine 15: Roamed.

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