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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the very, very late May edition of the Western Park Gazette.

This month we feature Mia and The Moon, two awesomely talented sisters from Westcotes who are about to release their second album. Roger Blackmore sits back in a comfy chair to extoll the virtues of wicker, Tony Huxley tells us about the Japanese fascination with British rapeseed, a new website launches for Westcotes and Helen Knott wonders why she had to get in a car to drive to her nearest polling station on the 7th of May. Talking of elections, we've a quick rundown of the winners and losers.

There are rumblings of discontent from some of the businesses on Braunstone Gate over plans to pedestrianise either part or all of the popular bar area and Kev Sharkey from Hinckley Road Policing unit gets his teeth into some local criminals.

And don't forget the Brain Tazers on the inside back page. We know you like them even though we've received death threats...

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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. Tel: Geoff on 0116 285 8352.

Peter Crebbin's Cool Swing Band: 1st Sun Monthly. Café Chino at Hilton Hotel, Meridian. 1-3.30pm & on **Sun 14 June**. Western Park Bandstand. 3-4pm.

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

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

Riverside Festival: 6th & 7th June. Western Boulevard and surroundings. Free.

Kingswood Area Watch Fair: 13 June. St Anne's Church Hall. Letchworth Rd.10.30-1.00pm.

Introduction to Skyping: 15th June. Brite Centre, Braunstone Library. 1-3pm. Free.

Find The Right Words - Poetry Open Mic: 17th June. Upstairs at the Western. 6.45pm. £6/£7.

Story of Jack The Ripper: 17th June. New Parks Library. 5-6.30pm. Free.

Railways of Leicestershire: 19th June. Fosse Library, Mantle Rd. 11-12 noon. Free.

Fosse Singers & The Chantrelers Summer Concert: 22nd June. Fraser Noble Building. 7.30pm

Western Park Open Gardens: 28th June. From St. Anne's Church Hall. 1-5pm. £3.50, under 16 free.

Western Park Festival: Sat 4th July.

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Grab the Moon!

Only the bravest of performers would tell TV's X Factor to take a hike and then walk straight out of boot camp. But that's exactly what two local girls did three years ago and they haven't looked back since.

Westcotes based singer-song writing sisters, Laura and Mary-Anne Ratcliffe, are steadily building up a loyal following as they relentlessly perform across Leicester and beyond, picking up rave reviews along the way.

Now they are preparing to launch their second LP at a special mini-festival event at the Green Place in Sileby on May 30th with the digital download available from 31st of July.

Laura said: "We're getting more recognition and we're really pleased that tickets went so quickly. Advanced tickets have all sold out but there's still some on the door.

"The album's called Fall Awake. There's 11 tracks covering different genres from folk and jazz to rock". Mary-Anne added: "We've been working with Neil Segrott at Tiny Studios who engineered Showaddywaddy and Beautiful South. It was a fun time and we made a good team and really focused on making a good album".

Their 14 date promotional tour takes them to Nottingham, Bristol, Manchester, London and includes appearances at the Foxton Locks Festival on 20th June and the Blacksmiths Arms, Loughborough on June 27th.

It's a busy time now, but what are their ambitions? "I'd like to write music for movies like James Bond!", said May-Anne whilst Laura chipped in with a big grin: "Mary-Anne likes studios! I'd like to be 1000 miles from our comfort zone, touring with musicians and being exotic in the sea with beautiful, hippy people!"

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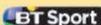
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Have you ever sat on a Dryad? No, it's not creature from Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter, it's a valuable piece of furniture and you may have one hidden at home.

Delights of Dryad

On a recent visit to the recently opened National Trust property at Stoneywell Cottage in the heart of Charnwood Forest our guide pointed out a Dryad cane chair.

In a cottage so reflective of the Arts and Crafts movement this is hardly surprising since the Leicester company of Dryad was, at one time, known all over the world both for its manufacture of cane furniture and production of craft materials.

Dryad Furniture was originally established in 1907 in premises on Belvoir Street by Benjamin Fletcher and Harry Peach. Fletcher was the Principal of Leicester School of Art and Peach originally a bookseller specializing in rare books. Within a few years the new company was employing fifty people and by 1911 the firm had to



move to new larger premises in St Nicholas Street. By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Dryad was employing nearly 200 people.

During the war Dryad supplied a wide variety of cane offcuts for encouraging the use of craft work as occupational therapy for wounded soldiers, a development which led to the establishment of Dryad Handicrafts in 1918. In 1915 Harry Peach was also one of the founders of the Design and Industries Association.

Dryad developed its businesses all over the world including supplies of craft materials for both educational and commercial use. Interestingly, Dryad cane chairs, being lightweight, were used as the principal seating in the first passenger aircraft as these developed in the years after the war. Mail order business also developed with the Leicester based company sending its products all over the world to as far afield as Japan and South America. By the 1930s Dryad had become the biggest supplier of craft materials in the world. A second London showroom had been set up in 1928.

In 1972 Dryad of Leicester was acquired by Reeves and Sons but the name Dryad still lives on. Perhaps its time to check whether you have one of their cane chairs in your attic or garden shed!

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KNOTT'S LANDING

Who moved my Cheese is the name of a famous self help book but in my house it's all been about who moved my polling station.

For three general elections I have trotted up the road to St. Anne's Church Hall to put my cross in a box. I like it because I can walk there, it's in line of site of the house and frankly, I know my way around that hall like the back of my hand.

Imagine my perplexed face then, when I got my polling card and it indicated I would have to head off to the foreign world of Wyngate Drive if I wanted to vote in person. Our polling station has moved. For some reason it is deemed not sensible to put the polling station within walking distance of a house but it now necessitates a car journey. We could have walked, admittedly, but it's quite a long way and it was the same day as our small person's swimming lessons. In order to get him home from school, to swimming and back, fed AND along to watch democracy in action while I voted, a car journey it had to be.

We got there and it was busy which is good, and even though the process will have wiped out a small Scandinavian paper plantation with all the voting slips, I managed to put a mark in a box. I happen to know a few people who officiate at

counts and I am reliably informed that if I draw a rude symbol on a ballot paper, so long as it is within the lines of the box it will count as a vote. There were an awful lot of people stood looking like they either drawing rude pictures or they were making their decision there and then, in that quiet moment in the polling booth. If that's true it's no wonder the polls got it so wrong.

One of the best bits of the day was seeing people in the street going out to exercise their hard won civic right, their democratic duty and going to vote. People getting dressed up for the occasion, kids being shown how it works, adults smiling at each other as they walk along, couples hand in hand; all because we are able to choose our leaders.

Of course the flip side to democracy is that most of the people who vote won't get who they voted for as their leaders.. and I guess that's where the book Who Moved My Cheese might come in useful.

Helen Knott



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WESTERN PARK FESTIVAL

Western Park Festival is due to return for its fourth year on Saturday 4th July, from 11am until 8pm.

This is certainly an event for the calendar! There will be something for everyone, from storytelling at the Book Bus, to crown green bowling at the Ladies Bowls Club, where you can have a go at bowling on the green, so long as you are wearing flat shoes!

If bowling is not your thing, how about being the ball and taking part in Zorbing?

After you have survived that, you could take in the festival vibe, stroll around and browse the stalls, listen to music from some of Leicester's best musicians, watch performances from local groups, all while have an ice cream and a beer.

Can You Help?

We are also looking for energetic helpers. If you can spare an hour on 4th July, please email: volunteer@westernparkfestival.co.uk

Ady Alexander

BANDS ON WESTERN PARK

THIS YEAR'S BANDSTAND LINE-UP

Peter Crebbin's Jazz Band.

Sun 14th June. 3-4pm.

Melton Band: Sun July 5th. 3-4pm.

Enderby Youth Band: Sun Aug 16th 3-4pm

The Odd Fellows Brass Band:

Sun 30th Aug. 3-4pm

Praise in the Park. (St. Anne's Band):

Sun 6th Sept. 4-5pm.

MARTYRS CELEBRATES!

On the afternoon of Saturday 4th July 2015 The Church of the Martyrs on Westcotes Drive is holding a (cream) tea party to celebrate and commemorate the 125th anniversary of its consecration on 10th July 1890.

There will be games in the gardens of the church and the church hall grounds, and places to sit and chat with a cuppa and a cake. It's open to everyone in the local community.

Later in the year, Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th September, a two day photographic exhibition is being planned using photographs contributed by past and present members of the congregation, their parents, family and friends.

If you have a photo of a memorable event - a wedding, a christening, even a funeral - carried out at The Church of the Martyrs, or Youth Club, or dance or play in the Church Hall and would consider lending it for the exhibition, please bring it along. It will be carefully scanned and returned to you as quickly as possible.

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TV action man and Chief Scout, Bear Grylls, touched down at Conkers activity centre in the New Forest in May as part of a whistle-stop tour.

He was met by enthusiastic youngsters, including 25 from the 43rd Scout Group based out of St. Peter's Church on Hinckley Road.

Members of the 43rd got the chance to hear him give a motivational speech on the benefits of scouting and watch him tackle an assault course with those who'd achieved the Chief Scout's Gold Award.



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BRAUNSTONE GATE FACELIFT

Leicester City Council is planning to give Braunstone Gate a facelift. They hope to promote a continental café style environment by making the road more cyclist and pedestrian friendly.

The council in partnership with Sustrans, a charity aiming to convince people to travel by foot, bike or public transport, are talking to businesses, pedestrians and residents on Braunstone Gate.

Business owners raised concerns at a "Braunstone Gate - Places for People" meeting, held in March, over the proposals. These included worries over the lack of short stay parking for out of town customers and a potential fall in trade due to a drop of drive-by customers should the area be totally pedestrianised. Some felt clientele would be discouraged by the lack of parking. Bar owners were more positive, hoping that improved pedestrianisation would make the area a more attractive place to visit by creating space for outside tables and chairs.

Val Smalley from the West End Traders Association said: "Café culture? Which two days of the year are they thinking of doing it? When did we last have a long spell of warm weather in Braunstone Gate?"

Other suggestions included making the street one lane - one-way and converting the rest to pedestrian areas, changing the arrangement of the parking spaces, dropping curbs and making the whole street 'shared space' for cars, people on bikes and pedestrians similar to Jubilee Square.



Andrea Cooper from Vickers Florist didn't mince her words: "There's not enough people around here to pedestrianise it. I'm not anti but why don't they just close it (to traffic) at night? I don't want this during the day. If it becomes all pedestrianised, that's us done. It's ridiculous".

Charlotte Jones from Sustrans said in an email to traders: "I will be contacting other businesses, residents and street users, to introduce them to the project. I'm also doing lots of research on similar street design projects, so that I can bring lots of examples and ideas from other cities, including solutions to parking issues".

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New Leicester West End Website

After months of hard work by volunteers a new community website for West Leicester has just been launched.

www.leicesterwestend.net is a local website covering activity in Westcotes and surrounding area.

The LWE website belongs to Friends of Bede Park who received a grant from the government fund, Community First, to enable them to produce it in partnership with The Western Park Gazette. The content was provided by volunteers and it is currently managed by Val at Tin Drum Books. Mark at Virtual Venture, which is a local web design business, produced the prize winning software that we used to build the website and his servers are keeping it alive. Many thanks are due to him from Val for showing her how to use it, answering a lot of idiotic questions and getting us there in the end.

Content is key to the new website and includes things like news; for instance, our new Lidl is open on Upperton Road and there is a new darkroom at Manor House. The site also focuses on events; you have just missed "Making a banjo out of a butter tub" at the Looking Glass but the Riverside Festival will soon be here! We encourage local community centres, church halls, libraries, pubs

and clubs to get involved not only to send us their community events but to advertise on the site to provide continuous funding. There is also a discussion forum, so if you have views on parking – start a string.

Such a lot goes on in West Leicester. It is so much more than takeaways and bars. Have you been to our pub-theatre yet above the Western pub on Western Road or stopped to chat with the Street

Pastors from Church of the Martyrs?

We hope you find it useful and interesting and are very open to suggestions.

Please email us at LWEwebsite@gmail.com or leave a message on our Facebook page.

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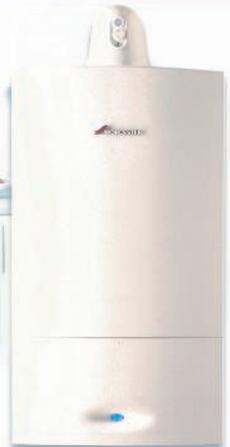
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Make a Splash!

In The Western Park Gazette

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May Police Update

SHARK ATTACK with Sgt. Kev Sharkey

On 22/4/15 local officers out on patrol found a completely naked man in the street on Harrow Road. The officers were initially concerned for the man's well-being but on speaking to him it was quickly established that the man was very aggressive. He was arrested and subsequently charged with indecent exposure.

On 24/4/15 a warrant was executed at an address on Beatrice road. A cannabis grow was found and a 49 year old woman and a 41 year old male were arrested and later released on Police bail pending further enquiries. We will continue to proactively target people involved in drugs which can bring a lot of harm to the community.

On Thursday 30/4/15 there was a disturbance between two groups of males on Tarragon Road which moved onto Bede Park in which one male received multiple injuries from a knife. The injured man is recovering in hospital and the investigating officer DS Cairns is appealing for witnesses to come forward. Were you in the park between 6.30pm and 9.30pm? Did you see a number of people congregating in the park that evening? Did you witness the disturbance? If you can help, then please call on 101 and quote incident 656 of the 30th April.

Our current focus is on incidents of thefts from vehicles which are being targeted by two different methods overnight; firstly by being broken into by the window being smashed and property taken and secondly, Peugeot 206 vehicles in particular are having the door locks removed to gain entry and property taken. Our patrols and enquiries continue to target and disrupt the persons responsible but I would encourage all vehicle owners to be vigilant and not to leave any property in their vehicles, even loose change which has often been the target of these attacks. It is worth noting that none of the attacked vehicles were fitted with an alarm and owners should consider fitting an alarm to their vehicles to deter these offences and to prevent the cost and inconvenience of replacing windows and doors, sometimes more than once.

Lastly, an address on Henton Road has been identified as the focal point of a series of anti-social behaviour incidents recently and we will be working closely with the Leicester Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to resolve this problem.

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



Leicestershire has many fine assets but let's be honest, great gardens don't really rank among them.

I love the University of Leicester Botanical Gardens and would thoroughly recommend it, but it's not a Wisley or Great Dixter, both stunning gardens and well worth a visit. Abbey Park is the green jewel in the city's crown but it's more a pleasant open space than a magnet for horticultural tourists. The great stately homes are so far away from the city centre they're practically falling into other counties, in fact I think several have.

So where should we flock to, to see an amazing floral display? It turns out, we might not need to go far at all. Recently, Japanese tourists have discovered our farmland turns a bright and sulphurous yellow in early summer and they've gone absolutely mad for it. Yes, the big draw is the annual oilseed rape crop, and now there are even organised tours to accommodate enthusiastic camera clicking hordes.

The oilseed crop divides opinion more clearly

than Marmite. My son loathes the smell and makes me close the car windows and turn off the air-con whenever he sees it. There are also deluded hay-fever sufferers who curse it, even though the pollen is too heavy to be blown by the wind - it needs millions of appreciative bees to help it along.

I think it's a natural wonder when massive swathes of countryside change colour almost overnight. And rapeseed oil has better cooking properties than olive oil, with lower fat too! In the 19th century it was grown to lubricate steam engines.

The agricultural palette isn't limited to yellow. Watch out for sky-blue squares of linseed, or the deeper hues of borage that produces starflower oil. So why not drive out into the country over the weekend and marvel at a free and local, spectacle.

© Tony Huxley





Martin Page

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Local Election Results

FOSSE WARD-Turnout 49.2%

ALFONSO, Dawn Victoria, Lab - 1,756

CASSIDY, Ted, Lab - 1,684

FORSE, Geoff, Green - 856

LIVINGSTONE, Benjamin, Green - 650

PRIDDEN, Nicholas Stefen, UKIP - 886

SCOTT, Brian Rodney, LICC - 184

YOUNG, Stuart Ian Eric, UKIP - 869

WESTCOTES WARD-Turnout 50.3%

CONNELLY, Andy, Lab - 1,859

RUSSELL, Sarah Christine, Lab - 1,615

DOSHI, Kirti, Con - 685

EDMETT, Antony, UKIP - 313

GAULIA, Eduardas, LD - 353

GIBBONS, Damon Peter, TUSC - 109

GILL, Gurjit Singh, LD - 256

GOSAI, Jitu, Con - 522

KIRK, Samantha Clare, LICC - 99

SMALLEY, Ian James, Green - 715

SMALLEY, Val, Green - 621

YOUNG, Carol, UKIP - 328

WESTERN WARD-Turnout 51.7%

BARTON, Susan, Lab - 2,909

COLE, Orlanzo George, Lab - 2,513

UNSWORTH, Malcolm William, Lab - 1,807

COLEY, Peter, LD - 1,479

ECCLESHARE, Paul William, Green - 680

GOULD, Mel, Green - 882

HENFREY, Nicola Jane, LD - 1,083

HUNT, Gary Glendon, LD - 841

MOXEY, Reginald Sidney, UKIP - 1,567

MURPHY, Stephanie, UKIP - 1,475

VINCENT, Caroline Louisa, LICC - 323

WITTERING, Stewart Keith, UKIP - 1,757

LEICESTER WEST Turnout 54.99%

Liz Kendall: Labour Party - 16,051

Paul Bessant: Conservative - 8,848

Ian Carmichael Bradwell: Lib Dem - 1,507

Peter Richard Hague: Green Party - 1,878

Heather Rawling: TYSC - 288

Stuart Young: UKIP - 5,950

LEICESTER MAYORAL Turnout 58.97%

Peter Soulsby: Labour Party - 71,533

Adrian Barnes: Lib Dem - 8,315

Paul Bremner: Conservative - 24,327

Tim Grayson: Green - 8,637

Barbie Potter: LICC - 3,028

Avtar Singh: Independent - 2,662

Dutch Veldhuizen: UKIP - 12,532

BRAIN *TAZERS*

1		2		3		4
5						
6						
7						

1 Across: Pail yellow flower 1 Down: Former British colony in the West Indies 2: Nestle 3: Teeny, tiny island 4: To elevate in respect 5: Sentimentally foolish 6: A mass of metal cast in a converted form 7: Buttercup-like plant.

© Paul Towers

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

1. I can only be found where things cannot; the dead consumes me all the time, but if the living eats me, death will follow. What am I?
2. Decipher this rebus: **PBLUESAISNUERSES**
3. Rearrange these to make 3 capital cities.
MORE LOUSE ANIMAL.
4. What connects **DOWN, PAPER, LINE, WOOD?**
5. **DRIVEL LOGS** is an anagram of 2 elements.
(Solutions at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk)

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