

Western Park Gazette

Information and advertising for the Western Park Area
No 10 December 2009 www.westernparkgazette.co.uk



MERRY CHRISTMAS



Season's Greetings

In this Yuletide issue, we have the official biography of Father Christmas, Leicester's Lord Mayor and Western Park historian Roger Blackmore revisits the Leicester Blitz of 1940 and as Winter tightens its grasp, our gardening guru Tony Huxley surveys the surprising colour we can see in the garden.

Helen Knott gets furious over parking proposals around Hinckley Road, Richard Perry delves into the world of Blu-ray and there was a spooktacular success during Halloween on Western Park.

There's a brilliant Christmas competition too, just count the Santas in the Gazette and you could win a leg of lamb from S. Patrick and B. Godwin butchers on Aikman Avenue. Details on page 12. You can have a go at the on-line version as well.

The Gazette also congratulates Lily and Alex Tunstall for their winning Christmas picture on the front page. We hope they enjoy Peter Pan at Curve.

We would like to wish our readers, contributors, advertisers and friends a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy 2010.

Sharon editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

Check out the website for the on line competition. Closing date - Dec 21st 2009.

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Santa is Real - The Proof!

He has many different names and many different faces; "Père Noël" in France, "Sinterklass" in the Netherlands, Kris Kringle from Germany and "Oy - You! Get off my roof!" in Braunstone. This timeless lord of gifts has regenerated many times over the millennia.

He is attributed to the 4th Century St. Nicholas of Myra in Turkey who gained a reputation for generosity, but the concept of a mysterious visiting figure during the Winter in Europe is much older.

In pagan times, the Germanic leader of the Gods, Odin, was said to ride across the sky during the Yule holiday. In classic poetry of the time Odin was called Long Beard and children would place their boots filled with carrots, sugar or straw by the chimney for his flying eight legged horse called Sileipner in return for gifts and sweets. This tale was brought over to Britain in the 8th Century, adding to the Saxon tradition of King Frost or Lord Snow, eventually completely merging into the story of a figure dressed in a cloak, cape, pointy hat and draped in ivy who would arrive to listen to people's woes. He also had a sack full of gifts for the needy and a white beard. He became known as Father Christmas or Lord Christmas, as his character blended into St Nicholas.

In the early 17th century, Oliver Cromwell's puritanical government banned Christmas with the obvious result that "Old Christmas" became the rallying point for those who still quite enjoyed a knees up. He survived, Cromwell didn't.

The myth of the gift bringer travels from Europe to North America and with it, the name Sinterklass, which eventually becomes Santa Claus

In 1823 Clement Clarke Moore's poem The Visit of St. Nicholas which starts "Twas the night before Christmas", cemented the modern Santa Clause story, but It wasn't until 1863

that the true image of Father Christmas as a jolly fat man, dressed in red with a bag of toys was revealed by American cartoonist Thomas Nast in Harpers Weekly. Until that time Father Christmas was pictured as tall and thin, nothing like his image today.

Nearly 200 years of mince pies and sherry certainly went to his waist!



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Halloween Party Scarily Successful

Halloween saw a new spooktacular event at Western Park this year with over 200 people joining in the fun.

There was a trail around the park for children to follow, a pumpkin carving competition and a fancy dress competition.

Storyteller Paul Gobey from Leicester Libraries also attended to send shivers down the spine of the children with his spooky stories.



The event was the first to be organized by the newly formed Friends of Western Park who are hoping to raise money for new play facilities on

the park.

Chairman of the group Ady Alexander said: "We were really pleased with how the event went. It was fantastic to see so many people enjoying the park and having fun in fancy dress.

"We have to thank Jit Parek at Riverford Organic Veg for his donation of a veg box and Curve for their donation of a family ticket to Peter Pan."



Holding an event near Western Park?

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email: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk
or The editor c/o 62 Ainsdale Road
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Events Diary

Santa Science - The Xmas Files at the National Space Centre. 19th -31st Dec. 10.00-5.00pm

Western Park Councillors Surgery. 10th Nov St. Paul's Church Rooms, Kirby Road. 7-8.00pm

Hanukah Lights Switch on in Victoria Park. Fri eve. 11th Dec.

Bloomin' Christmas Stories and crafts. Sat 12th Dec. New Park's Library (5-11 yrs) 10.30am. Free.

Christmas Crackers Stories and crafts. Sat 12 Dec. Fosse Library (5-11 yrs) 2.00pm. Free

Santa Special Santa drives the train at Abby Park. 13th Dec. 11.00-3.00pm.

Spirits of Christmas Seasonal Ghost stories. Guildhall. 17th Dec. 7.30. Tickets £.7.50. 0116 253 2569

Mulled Wine Mince Pies and Music Guildhall. 18th Dec. 5.00-8.00pm. £3.00.

Family Ghost watch at New Walk Museum 21st Dec. 5.30.-8.30pm. 32.70. 0116 225 4900.

City of Leicester Singers Classic Carols Sat 19th Dec - 7.30pm. St. James The Greater Church. Tickets £7.00 (under 16's free) 0116 239 2708.

Zumba Class Tues 8-9.00pm at St Anne's Church Hall. £4.00 Call Sarah 07810 307113.

Spiritual Development Circle every Thursday. 6-9.00pm at Angel Source Holistics, 14 Hinckley Road.

Dishna - 07955 634221.

Knitting Circle Meet every Thursday from 1pm at Mary Clare, 4 Shaftsbury Av. Tel: 0116 2551866.

Roger Backmore looks back at the days when enemy bombers raided Leicester during the Second World War.

When Bombs fell on Western Park

The night of November 14th 1940 was a particularly terrifying one for our area. After separate raids on the city a couple of months earlier, bombs were dropped on the old Cattle Market and Filbert Street as well as Latimer Street, Livingstone Street, Fosse Road South, and Bolton Road, all bearing the brunt of the attack.

As the Luftwaffe bombers dropped their payloads, the searchlight and anti aircraft battery at the top of Shoulder of Mutton Hill sprang into action, pounding away into the night, following the beam of light hunting for a target but attracting strafing machine gun fire from German fighter escort aircraft.

A week later 490 German aircraft took off from France and Belgium with Birmingham as their main target. Several of these planes headed for Leicester, dropping parachute mines on Victoria Park and in the North Evington area.

One of these resulted in a direct hit on the Steels and Buses engineering factory which manufactured parts for the Spitfire.

Although Leicester did not suffer as much as Coventry or Birmingham, air raids continued through out much of the war. Bombs hit the Braunstone area, one hit the corner house on Franche Road and another which landed on the Town Hall failed to explode.

It should not be forgotten that many lost their lives during these and other raids on the city. Indeed a fuller understanding of the impacts of these attacks on Leicester has only become fuller researched in more recent times.

In the above picture - the damage caused to the house on the corner of Franche Road and Glenfield Road.

It is thought that the bomb was released from a crippled plane on it's way to attack Coventry in April 1941.

If you have any memories or photos of The Leicester Blitz, please get in touch.



I Could Have Danced All Night

Tickets have gone on sale for the Friends of Western Park Charity Ball 2010.

The Friends of Western Park is a new group hoping to make big improvements to the play facilities on the park through raising money and awareness.

A black tie event, the evening will include a three course meal and a live band as well as an auction, a raffle and a photographer to capture you looking your best.

Ady Alexander, chairman of FoWP, said: "All funds raised from this event will go towards improving and maintaining our beautiful and historic City of Leicester Park."

"It is going to be a glittering evening and a chance for everyone to put on their glad rags and have a great time, all in a good cause."

The event takes place at The City Rooms in Leicester on Saturday 6 March and tickets cost £35 per person, £350 for a table of ten.

For more information email info@friendsofwesternpark.co.uk or call Ady Alexander on 07952 972212.



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KNOTT'S LANDING

Helen Knott

The last time I looked there was a recession on in this country so you might think that local councils would be doing everything they can to support local businesses, not embarking on a scheme that is going to kick off local shops and drive a stake into the heart of the community.

A plan for residents parking in the West End of Leicester is one of the craziest ideas I've heard in a long time – unless you are talking about it as a revenue raising opportunity for the council in which case it makes perfect sense.

The scheme will operate within the boundaries of Western Road, Fosse Road, Upperton Road and Hinckley Road and it will cost residents to park their cars outside their own homes. Anyone visiting or working in the area will be forced to park on the surrounding roads or cough up for their own pass.

There is talk of a few bays for shoppers and workers, but this is a daft idea as there are clearly many more residents' cars than spaces so residents will use them too.

Anyone working in the area will have to walk miles to work after parking their car just outside the residents parking area, pushing the problem further out of the area.

One solution could be the car park up on Fosse Road next to Westcotes health centre, which has a two hour limit on it so can't be used by workers. Change that and you have immediately taken quite a few cars off the local streets.

This scheme annoys me because I try to shop locally on Hinckley and Narborough Roads, I have my hair cut at Cease, I use Brennans pharmacy, the library and the restaurants like Entropy. Most times I do this, I take my car.



Parking problems off Hinckley Road

I know the bus runs down Hinckley Road but I defy anyone to attempt the soul destroying task of waiting for a bus with room for a pram on it. Watching five buses go by with a handful of passengers but a bay full of buggies is my personal best.

The council have said they will put a temporary scheme in place if they win a residents vote. I'm hoping common sense prevails and people vote no, partly because if it happens in the West End, it will probably spread through the city and partly because I'll have to find somewhere else to do my shopping.

GAZETTE COMPETITION

Congratulations to last month's Gazette competition winner Kate Niland who has won a fantastic meal for four at the Globe.

And the answer to the question - Iraq is where you find the earliest known examples of brewing. Ironically the kind of place you won't find it now.

This month we've got together with Western Park's nearest butcher to offer you a very seasonal prize.

This Christmas you can tuck into a whole leg of lamb from S. Patrick and B. Godwins on Aikman Avenue.

They've been butchers in West Leicester for 20 years and specialise in affordable free range and traceable meat as well as producing their own home-made sausages, burgers and pickles.

To win the leg of lamb just count the number of Santas in the Gazette.



Email your answer by Dec 21st to

editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

Or by post to

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One correct answer picked at random. No cash alternative and editor's decision is final.

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GAZETTE LETTER BOX

I am trying unsuccessfully to remember the name of the Shipstones pub which stood at the junction of Narborough Road and Hinckley Road before the new road (dual carriageway) was built. Could you ask your readers to advise? And possibly to submit a picture?

Thanks in anticipation.

Phil Hardy

Please contact the Gazette if you can help.

Barclay Street Bafflement Continues

Whoops!! I owe you and your readers a massive apology. I got mixed up in my letter last month about whether Barclay Street had changed its name from Bismarck Street. I got mixed up with Beaconsfield Road. Must have been all the 'B's that confused me. The top part of Barclay Street, above Sykefield Avenue, used to be called Hill Top according to old maps. I still believe the Street is named after Dr. Barclay.

Su Barton

Regarding your article about Tom Barclay, which I found most interesting, my information shows that Barclay Street was named after Dr Barclay in 1900. I don't think that this was the same Dr Bar-

clay that lived at Richmond House on Richmond Street, latterly Gateway School.

Derek Hollingworth

Email your letters to

editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

BRAIN 1
11
TASER 21
1211
111221

What is the next row?

Tired of pulling your hair out looking for the answer? You'll find it on line at

www.westernparkgazette.co.uk

The answer to last month's Brain Taser was 21.

If you enjoy puzzles and you would like to baffle Western Park, send them in and we'll print the most annoying!

Remember to include the solution!

If you would like to write for the Gazette email editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

Cook That Turkey Safely

Food poisoning statistics generally tend to rise during the festive season.

To ensure that you have a 'Happy Christmas' and not a 'Hospitalised Christmas', follow these 4 simple steps when preparing your turkey:

1. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling the bird, when raw and cooked.

2. Ensure that you cook the turkey thoroughly. Your turkey is likely to be larger than you are used to cooking and so ensure that you follow the guidelines on the label. If in doubt, cook for longer so that the juices run clear before serving (remember to check the centre)



3. After cooking, refrigerate any left over turkey within 90 minutes of taking from the oven.

Use the left over turkey within 3 days – no longer! 3 days of turkey meals is enough for anyone.

For further food safety advice visit The Food Standards Agency website at www.food.gov.uk

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With our trusty VHS recorders now consigned to the dustbin after over 30 years of use and HD TV's more and more popular is it worth spending on a new Blu-ray player to watch high definition films? Richard Perry has the answer.

Nice Box - What's in it?

Richard Perry

Whether Santa brings Western Park brand new Blu-ray players for Christmas or not, we will end up buying one eventually as traditional DVDs make way for higher quality Blu-ray content.

There are pitfalls and pleasures with this. You will still be able to happily watch your DVD collection but Blu-ray discs won't work on traditional DVD players.

A television with a 1080p screen is a must to get the full benefit. Many earlier HD ready televisions don't have the screen or the processing power to cope. All those who bought into the hype and spent a fortune as plasma and LCD TV's hit the shops a few years ago, may have a costly upgrade if they want to experience high definition in all its glory. Just because a logo says HD Ready, doesn't mean it's actually any good at it. Some budget TV's still available today are certainly not, so always look out for the gold 1080p sign on the screen because that's what you need.

As with HDTV's, the cost of Blu-ray players is falling as they become more popular. One supermarket is selling a solid branded entry level player for under £100. If you just want to watch films in high quality that's spot on, but for the technically savvy the sky's the limit!

New products which record Freesat HDTV, high-def home movies on a hard drive as well as play and burn Blu-ray disc are now on the market for around £600.

So is Blu-ray any good? Yes it is. On a 1080p screen, the picture is brilliantly clear, vivid and incredibly detailed, very close to the cinema experience. Normal DVDs are also much sharper.

If you haven't been bitten by the Blu-ray bug yet, you can compromise with an "up scaling" DVD player for around £50 which matches standard DVD's to your HD screen's native resolution giving you a much better picture, not far behind high-definition. Happy Shopping!



Tony Huxley's Garden Tidings



In the depths of winter, nothing reminds me more of summer, and a fresh year of gardening possibilities, than the sight of brightly coloured winter berries.

Holly is not the only plant able to provide festive cheer. Varieties of mountain ash have fruit in many different hues, like the soft yellow berries of Sorbus "Joseph Rock", or pale pink of Sorbus cashmiriana. With fearsome thorns, Pyracanthus can be the terror of many an unwary pruner. Now though, it is draped with clusters of yellow, orange and red berries. Callicarpa has such perfect little purple berries, you would think Santa's elves glued them on in the night. The deep pink seed pods of Eonymus europaeus clash joyously with the tangerine seed within. And so the list goes on.



Pyracanthus

Before finishing this year, I must mention a special winter fruit in my own garden. This Christmas, we are celebrating our first strawberries! Not the Wimbledon kind, but the fruit of our Arbutus, or Strawberry Trees. These large evergreen shrubs, with pretty white-pink blushed bell shape flowers, are relatives of heather. We have two species. Arbutus Unedo is the classic Strawberry Tree. Unedo means to "eat only one", as the edible fruit has poor flavour. The other, Arbutus "Marina" has larger leaves and attractive foxy-coloured peeling bark. We will be admiring nature's baubles mainly from behind the double glazing with a glass of festive cheer!

May I wish you all a very berry Christmas!

More bad puns from Tony in January

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Christmas Message

From St. Anne's

You might expect a clergyman to bang on about the loss of the real meaning of Christmas, but here is one who enjoys any excuse for a good party and a celebration!

It can happen that the run-up to Christmas provokes the dread of having to spend time shut in with family members we manage to avoid the rest of the year and of having to spend as much on our kids' presents as the neighbours; so something has sadly gone wrong when anxiety replaces celebration.

Religion is often described as our search for God, but Christmas actually tips that upside down.

Christians are people with something to celebrate: that God has come to us. Whatever else Christmas is about, it's about the God coming to us and becoming one of us: the baby in the manger who then as an adult is nailed to a Cross is God reaching out in love to us, sharing our humanity in order to heal it.

Rvd. Christopher Oxley



Events in the Parish

St. Anne's St. Paul's and St. Augustine's

At St. Anne's Church Hall -

Mondays: 5.30 -7pm WEA Yoga 0116 255 6614
7.15 - 9pm Tai Chi with Rick.

Tues: 7.30 - 9.00pm Women's Yoga.

2nd Tues: 2.00 - 4.00pm Mother's Union visiting speakers. (or 4th Wednesday)

3rd Tues: 7.30 - 9.30pm Western Park Gardening Club.

Tues: 10 am Mums and Toddlers and at 1.30 pm: Over 60's Group. **At St. Paul's.**

Wed: 5 -7.30pm Weightwatchers.

1st Wed: 2.30 - 4pm Wednesday Club with visiting Speakers and 7.15 - 8.15pm Tai Chi with Rick.

4th Wed: 7.00 - 9.00pm Mother's Union visiting speakers.

Thurs: 09.00 - 10.00pm Pilates.

Thurs: 1.30 Pram Club.

Thurs: Re-bouncer Aerobics Club.

Fri: 10.00 - Coffee Drop ins.

1st Fri: 11.30 am Light Lunches.

2nd & 4th Fri: 2.30 - 4.30pm International Barn Dance.

To book St Anne's Community Hall for your event: Call Nick Butler - 07792 123 630

Tues 8th Dec 10.00 -2.00 pm Carols and Mince Pies with St. Paul's Mothers' Union,

Sat 12th Dec Christmas fair at St. Paul's Worship Centre.

Sat 12 Dec St. Anne's open from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm for the Memory Tree. You can write the name of a departed loved one on a simple decoration to hang on a Christmas tree at the front of church.

Thurs 17th Dec - 10 am West Gates School Carols in St. Anne's.

Friday 18th Dec - 10 am Dovelands School Carols in St. Anne's.

Mon 21st 7 to 8 pm at St. Paul's Worship Centre.

"Sing Christmas!" With BBC Radio Leic. Refreshments following!

Christmas in our churches



Christmas Eve at St. Anne's

6 pm Community Carols and Blessing of the Crib.

11.30 pm First Eucharist of Christmas.

(Midnight Mass)

Christmas Day at St. Paul's

10.15 am Holy Eucharist.

Christmas Day at St. Anne's

8 am Holy Eucharist (1662 BCP)

10 am Holy Eucharist.

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